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The Shape of Things

★

A PUNCH-DRUNK WORLD HAD REASON TO await with some trepidation the coming of another May Day. Time was when May Day was an occasion for revolutionary labor to show its strength, but now the left is on the defensive and in many countries its day has been stolen to make political capital for the forces of fascist reaction. In Czechoslovakia Henlein Nazi leaders had warned workers in advance to realize that "this day does not belong to them but to the Führer," and storm troopers had informed the population that "the end is close at hand." As matters turned out, no earth-shaking events occurred, but the political exploitation of the day was generally apparent. Paris workers contented themselves with a mild demonstration in support of the Popular Front; New Yorkers, divided into two camps, denounced American reaction; and the U. S. S. R. utilized the day to display once more its military power. Ironically it was the Germans who—next to the Russians—put on the biggest show, with Chancellor Hitler explaining to a million Nazis just how much better off they were than the downtrodden workers of other lands, Italy excepted. British workers of varying shades converged on Hyde Park to convert the occasion into a "Spain Day" for aid to the Barcelona government, and pathetic Vienna, once the Socialist capital of the world, had to put up with Nazi-planted Maypoles and slogans informing them that "work ennobles." Closest to the traditions of the day was the demonstration in Mexico City, where what is described as the "New World's first proletarian army" marched 100,000 strong to give President Cárdenas the clenched-fist salute. But bravest of all was the demonstration at Karlsbad, Czechoslovakia, where 20,000 Sudeten Germans defied those who might one day be their oppressors to hear a Social Democrat denounce Herr Henlein and his boss in Berlin.

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NORMAN THOMAS TOOK A MAY DAY TRIP to Frank Hague's totalitarian town last Saturday and was promptly and unceremoniously dumped outside its borders when he tried to make a speech in Journal Square. He had been refused a permit to speak on the ground that a Catholic veterans' organization had objected to it as likely to cause violence. Persisting in his contention that the Constitution of the United States was valid in Journal Square, he went anyway. "The only thing I had a

chance to say," said Mr. Thomas, "was, 'So this is Jersey justice.' " It was an apt remark, for he was immediately seized by the police and plain-clothes men and placed forcibly on a ferryboat bound for New York. He went right back by tube and was again ejected. Meanwhile some fifteen people who were distributing various publications and leaflets were prevented from doing so in direct contravention of the recent Supreme Court decision ruling that ordinances requiring a license for the distribution of literature are unconstitutional. Mr. Thomas has appealed to the federal authorities in an attempt to have the New Jersey police arraigned on a kidnapping charge. He has also appealed to the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee. His first appeal will probably fall on barren ground, but a thorough investigation of Hague's rule by the La Follette committee has already been too long deferred. We congratulate Norman Thomas for the persistence with which he exercises his civil liberties in spots where he is most likely to meet police clubs.

✱

THE LATEST JAPANESE DRIVE ON HSUCHOW appears to have met the fate of the two previous ones. Reports from the front indicate that after the capture of Tancheng, a few miles north of the Lunghai railway, the Japanese encountered an unbreakable resistance. Credit is given to the unofficial, and in some cases non-Nazi, German advisers on Chiang Kai-shek's staff for the strategy used to stem the Japanese advance, and the Chinese defense is said to have been strengthened by the receipt of a large shipment of German tanks, Nazi trade interests apparently superseding the loyalties called for in the anti-Comintern pact. Elsewhere the Chinese seem to be doing well without foreign aid. Guerrilla units have for days been carrying on a battle with Japanese outposts a few miles west of Peiping, and guerrilla raids are becoming ever more daring and effective in Shansi. A Chinese army has seized Chochow and disrupted service on the Peiping-Hankow railway. The Chinese air force scored its first major victory on the Mikado's birthday, repelling with heavy losses a raid on Hankow. Faced with growing difficulty in obtaining essential war materials from abroad, Japan must smash the Lunghai salient in the near future if it is ever to break through. Each day of stalemate increases the likelihood of an ultimate Chinese victory.

✱

ANTI-TRUST ENFORCEMENT IS GETTING A new lease of life. The President's message to Congress on monopoly was a thoughtful and clean-cut analysis of the present-day "concentration of private power without equal in history," and of the results in social terms of the decline of competition. It asked for the enactment of a comprehensive program of legislation to deal with this problem, but only after a thorough inquiry into the industrial structure. This inquiry may, if well conducted, prove one of the landmarks in the fight against monopoly. That is, however, a long-run matter. Meanwhile, what about an immediate program? The Department of

Justice has been lucky in its last two assistant attorney generals in charge of the division of anti-trust enforcement. Robert H. Jackson gave a new militancy to the work of the division. And now Thurman Arnold brings to it a shrewd and realistic understanding of business and its dodges and devices. Outlining his proposed policy in a recent speech, he made it clear that anti-trust enforcement was more necessary in a depression than ever, for a depression squeezes the little fellows to the wall; that he would keep his eye peeled more carefully for the actual economic results of restraint of trade than for the mystical legal questions of conspiracy and intent; that he would not hesitate to prosecute criminally as well as civilly; and, most important, that since the department cannot prosecute every violation he would select certain typical cases, give them wide publicity, and make it clear that the failure of the government to prosecute any particular corporation did not imply acquiescence in its practices. We have felt in the past that anti-trust enforcement was an impossible and heartbreaking task in the present capitalist structure. If any administrative program can make headway with that task, this one seems to have a chance.

✱

AMERICA'S NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS AT THEIR annual convention have reaffirmed collectively the policies which have discredited them individually in large areas of the country. This year's gathering turned out to be an uninspiring pep-rally at which Frank Gannett received his varsity open-letter and Franklin D. Roosevelt was violently upbraided. Although most of the sessions were secret, the few public meetings offered a morbid hint of what happened when the doors were barred. The publishers denounced the NLRB and came out for their own freedom in ringing terms, assailed the Senate Lobby Committee and saw the menace of dictatorship in the President's fireside talks, smugly noted the maintenance of newspaper wage-levels without mentioning the Newspaper Guild's role in maintaining them. The guild was undoubtedly discussed at greater length when reporters weren't present. Throughout these desultory sessions the one bright spot was the report condemning pseudo-war-profits legislation, a report which demonstrated once more that the publishers valiantly defend the people's freedom when it happens to coincide with their own. On the whole the convention merely underlined the widening gap between the views of American publishers and the facts of American life.

✱

IN ADDING SIXPENCE TO THE TAX RATE AT a time of rapid economic deterioration, the Chamberlain government has administered a timely, if unintentional, rebuke to the American conservatives who have been whimpering for lower taxes as an aid to recovery. A mere comparison of the British and American tax rates should shame our Tories into a state of relative quiet. The British income levy now starts at 27½ per cent after a series of exemptions which are far lower than our own. Thus a married couple with an income of \$3,000 a year must

pay a tax of \$283.12 in Great Britain, while their counterpart in New York pays a combined federal and state tax of \$23. For a couple with an income of \$5,000, the British tax is \$723.12 as compared with a federal and state tax of \$170 here. In addition, the British pay indirect taxes which on the whole are heavier than ours. The horse-power tax on automobiles is extremely high; there is a tax of 18 cents a gallon on gasoline; and there are levies on beer, tea, amusements, checks, and legal documents. Land taxes are high and inescapable. All in all, it is estimated that the British pay 27 per cent of the national income in taxes. This may be compared with a levy of 19 per cent on the vastly higher per capita income in this country. That the increase in the tax on tea and gasoline will be deflationary can scarcely be denied. The income levy, however, will not have this effect, since it falls on those whose purchasing power is not appreciably lessened by taxation. If borrowing from the well-to-do for governmental expenditures is inflationary, it can hardly be deflationary to obtain the same money from the same people by taxation.

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SOMEONE HAS GOT A GOOD THING IN THE Women's Rebellion against government spending which broke out in Suffern, New York, and is spreading through the housewife sector of the metropolitan suburbs. It claims to be an "innocent" organization. It began when Mrs. Charles P. Bispham, wife of the Episcopal rector of a parish in which a number of wealthy New York City business men have large estates, and Mrs. Sarah Oliver Hulswit of Suffern, whose husband is manager of the Rockland Gas Company, distributed 10,000 circulars condemning the President's recovery program; the demand for the circulars has been so great that 20,000 more have been issued. When the ladies were asked who put up the money for the pamphlets, Mrs. Hulswit finally said that she had taken some of her family's food money and sold a couple of antiques. Her family, she said bravely, would have to live on stews. We have a feeling that Mrs. Hulswit's stews would be lobster Newburgh to a relief family, but the conservative newspapers, at least, find the Women's Rebellion convincing. It fits their editorial pages like a glove. Mrs. Hulswit is said to have dashed off the pamphlet in a burst of anti-spending inspiration at two o'clock in the morning, but it sounds to us more like the inspiration of a high-powered publicity writer between nine and five of a very serious business day. The pamphlet is full of demagogic appeals and Republican economics that do not ordinarily come unprompted from the mouths of babes and wealthy housewives: "What has 'pump-priming' of \$18,000,000,000 during the last five years done for you?" "Women, save this country for your children!" "Are you one of the 14,000,000 on relief?" etc., etc. And who would have thought that two simple long-Suffern housewives would be invited immediately to broadcast their message over a Columbia Broadcasting System hook-up?

The New Progressives

IT MUST by now be apparent that the traditional political compass is not adequate for gauging the direction of the new La Follette movement. Is it "left" or "right" of the New Deal? No one knows. Is it "progressive" or "conservative"? No one knows. Whether through shrewdness or haziness Governor La Follette has succeeded in giving the slip to the professional direction-finders, and has doubled back on his trail so many times as to leave the hounds baffled. But there can be no similar doubt about the political premises on which his new bid for power is based. There are two calculations that he obviously is making. One is that the nation is in for complete economic collapse—with a deeper depression by 1940 than we have yet had. The second is that Roosevelt has lost his fight for the leadership of a reformed Democratic Party, and that he must now pass the baton to a less tired runner.

One thing is clear from La Follette's statements. This movement is a revolt against the left wing of the New Deal as well as against the President. Where they in their political evolution discovered labor and its needs, Governor La Follette has discovered the middle class and its psychology. Where they are conscious of the problem of better distribution and of social security, La Follette is conscious of the problem of increased production and a reinvigorated capitalism. Where they think in terms of the social-service state and an increasing measure of socialization, he thinks in frontier-populist terms of individualism. Where their thinking has run increasingly in terms of class needs and an economic base of political power, his runs in terms of a new nationalism.

He has had a good press. In view of the premises given above and the desire of the press lords to smear the New Deal, that is not surprising, although it may be disquieting to some of his followers. When the *Journal of Commerce* smiles on a movement, and when Roy Howard, Walter Lippmann, and Dorothy Thompson bless it, one may be certain it is not in the more recent progressive tradition. Walter Lippmann's analysis of La Follette's platform is shrewd and significant: he has laid his finger unerringly on its rejection of the collectivist premises of the New Deal and its return to some of the basic laissez faire notions that had presumably been thrown on the dump heap of history.

We shall continue to regard the La Follette movement with critical sympathy until our suspicions and fears about it are given more substance. Meanwhile we must place those fears sharply on record. For one thing, the wrong people are cheering the new party and the right people are remaining cool and distant. The failure to consult Senator Norris in advance, which Paul Y. Anderson refers to elsewhere in this issue, may be set down to faulty planning. But the failure of labor groups to be given a prominent place either in the Governor's speeches or in the movement itself is surely part of a more studied and deliberate purpose. In all probability this is partly due to the fear of being tainted too early with the labor

stigma; partly to a belief that the labor and farmer groups will come along eventually and that the first job is to woo the small-business and lower-middle-class groups.

Then there is the question of splitting the progressive forces. The damage that the new party will do to the progressive cause may possibly be regarded as the necessary wastage in creating a new political alignment. But the question of timing is still an insistent one. Few of the left-wing Democrats regard their war as a lost cause. Granted, as every progressive grants, that a new alignment is inevitable by 1940, there is still a question whether an attack on the New Deal now is the right way to achieve it. In their anxiety to allow ample time in which to build the necessary political cadres for 1940, the La Follettes run the grave danger of scrapping the cadres that have already been formed by arduous effort.

What troubles us even more is the presence in the La Follette build-up of many of the elements of latter-day mystical nationalism and middle-class symbolism. It is no secret that Governor La Follette, on his return from his recent visit to Germany, was impressed with its concrete achievements and with some elements in its political tactics. There are traces of that influence in the symbolism of the cross within a circle which the Governor has adopted for the National Progressives of America, in the name itself, in the injunction to make the party into a religion, in the pointed rejection of class concepts, in the sanctity with which the Western Hemisphere is invested, in the appeal to broad slogans of patriotism and plenty without giving a bill of particulars. We believe in the Governor's own intentions, and we respect the tradition behind him. Yet these are dangerous symbols to play with. Democracy must be militant and disciplined if it is to survive. It must fight fire with fire. But does it not have a fire within itself that is potent to meet what the Governor calls the Black Plague? Or must it borrow some of the fascist flame in order to fight fascism?

What troubles us most is the new party's lack of a program. We have no intention of rejecting a genuine progressive movement merely because it doesn't jibe with our way of going at things. In the early stages of a movement vagueness may be intentional and politically shrewd. But there are some things the Governor was not vague about. The shocking callousness about relief involved in his remarks about "coddling and spoonfeeding the American people" had concreteness enough. What was left vague was how the American people are to be given jobs and security. Will the framework of regulation of industry thus far built up be abandoned? What will be the program on monopoly? on the public utilities? on the TVA? on collective bargaining? on social security? Governor La Follette assumes a grave responsibility when he offers to lead the progressive forces in a new alignment. Unless the coming convention of the new party can work out a program on which all progressive groups can unite—a program that stands a chance of coping with the twin plagues of economic collapse and fascism—the La Follette movement will have succeeded only in further disillusioning the masses and leaving them a prey to the reaction that will follow.

Hitler Goes to Rome

THE most important single thing that has happened in Europe during the last few weeks is a shift of weight. Just after the conquest of Austria, Germany's weight in relation to Italy's was very high. But Chamberlain's agreement with Mussolini tipped the Rome-Berlin axis the other way. In this shifting balance hangs the fate of Europe. Mussolini could not even suggest disapproval of Hitler's march to the Brenner; but today, with the support of Britain and the prospective backing of France, he may be able to resist or at least bargain shrewdly over further proposed German moves toward the south and east. Hitler on his part will probably press for a definite military agreement, while Italy may have been drawn closer to its old hope—a four-power pact in which the weight would be on the side of France, Britain, and itself. No one expects that these complicated cross-purposes will be completely resolved in the course of the discussions about to be held at Rome, or that the results of the conversations will be announced or even immediately felt. All that is clear is that the elegant amenities of the celebration will conceal new elements of conflict and that Hitler comes to Rome not as a conquering hero but as a man with a case to plead.

When thieves fall out, honest men are supposed to feel comfortably secure. But in the present situation no special comfort can be taken from these supposed differences. Both Hitler and Mussolini have much to gain by sticking together; the British-Italian pact was itself a tribute to the axis. Italy and Germany will continue to be the recipients of generous overtures from the anxious democracies just as long as and no longer than they present a double-barreled threat to the interests of their neighbors.

In any case it is not to be supposed that Hitler will be bargained or scared out of an attempt to control Czechoslovakia. Whether he likes it or not—and it is reliably reported that he would have preferred to postpone the job till later—he is committed to the rescue of his racial brothers in the Sudeten area. Henlein's demands are explicit and go far beyond the best possible terms of the Prague government. Hodza has already stated to Britain the extreme limits to which his government is prepared to go in meeting them, and not even Chamberlain can ask that it permit the break-up of the republic or outright Nazi domination of the German sections. The Czechs will fight before they allow that, and their army is efficient, well equipped, and highly trained. Certainly Hitler would be better advised to pursue a course of economic penetration and control than to risk a war the ultimate outcome of which even he must view with distrust.

Whether he decides to move cautiously or not depends in part on the behavior of his own Sudeten supporters and in part on his estimates of British and French intentions. In spite of the new military agreement between those powers, it is clear that no similar agreement exists on Continental policy. France wants to back Czecho-

slovakia, but only if Britain will back France; and the French delegates went home without guaranties on that score. If they gained any assurance it was implicit rather than explicit, and the French press has been debating the chances of British action ever since. The best guess seems to be that Chamberlain will be prepared to countenance a French *démarche* in case Germany makes an aggressive move against Czechoslovakia after the Czechs have yielded to all the British demands in behalf of the German minority. To hope for more than this would be rash. On the other hand the French are pleased with the general results of their agreement with the British. They know at least that if war threatens in the West a unified Franco-British defense can be depended upon. This knowledge may go far to stiffen their foreign policy and so to lessen the actual chance of war.

The Railroad Muddle

THE Administration's economic moves are beginning to make some sense. But the recovery we need depends on immediate action not only in general spending but in breaking the log-jam in the three crucial industries—construction, automobiles, railroads. The 15 per cent pay cut just imposed on the men and the threat of a strike raise more sharply than ever the question of what we are going to do with the railroads.

Analyses a-plenty of what is wrong with the roads have already been made. What it comes down to is that the railroad systems have rifled the past and mortgaged the future. Huge profits have been made out of them in the past by the robber barons of transportation—chiefly through melons sliced from overcapitalization. As long as the country kept growing and traffic kept increasing, the roads were able to pay their ransom and bear the enormous burden of fixed charges. But when the period of growth came to an end, and when in addition motor transport began to cut into railroad revenue, trouble began. The depression has cut traffic so that it is no longer possible to pay the heavy fixed charges in the form of interest on bonds; yet that bonded indebtedness still sits like an Old Man of the Sea on the shoulders of the railroad Sinbad. A third of the mileage of the country is today in receivership; nearly as much is kept out of it only by handouts from the RFC. Workers have been laid off or are on part time; there are men with twenty and thirty years' service who can't get a run. The physical properties have deteriorated to the danger-point. A minimum of new equipment is being purchased. The Interstate Commerce Commission is besieged with requests for permission to abandon spurs and lines that are not paying their way, and thus the local communities which in the final analysis must be relied on to feed the arteries of commerce are being doomed to become deserted villages.

In the face of this nothing is being done. Some months ago the President appointed a special ICC committee to draft recommendations. White House conferences were

held, and the thing was front-page stuff. But what had loomed as a mountain of hope finally delivered itself of a mouse. Not even the ICC commissioners could have taken their slight recommendations seriously. Nor has Congress done more than the Executive. After three years of work and the expenditure of a million dollars, Senator Wheeler's railroad-investigating committee has nothing to offer in the way of a program. There are reports that the President and Wheeler are engaged in political maneuvers. Each passes the buck to the other; each is afraid to get out on a limb in tackling a difficult job; each is unwilling to help the other's position by finding a solution.

But the nation is uninterested in their fears and politics. Unless we can put men back to work, there will soon be very little chance for any of us to play politics.

There is a clear program to be followed: first, a freight-pooling plan. It has been almost two decades since the Transportation Act of 1920 enjoined the ICC to draw up blueprints for consolidating the railroads. Nothing has happened. Complete consolidation will take years more to work out. Meanwhile a freight pool, experiments with which have been made in the past, will help the weaker roads that do not get their share of freight rerouting and will lower shipping costs for manufacturers. Second, steps toward rationalizing the railroads. Instead of letting the Pennsylvania and the B. and O. continue to compete for freight and passenger traffic, let each specialize functionally in what it can do best within an integrated traffic system. Third, revision of the debt structure. The bonded indebtedness, which keeps the roads from bailing themselves out, must be drastically written down. This could conceivably be done by putting some roads through the bankruptcy wringer, but it would be much better done by a rational plan that did not victimize particular roads. Bond-holders, including the life-insurance companies, which are heavily involved, would rather be assured of a portion of their return than get nothing at all. Fourth, the creation of a separate Railroad Equipment Corporation. This could operate with the RFC money that is now being poured into the roads; but whatever money it operates with should be spent on equipment for roads that have been rid of their incubus of staggering interest charges. Fifth, new investment. There is ample money lying about that would flow into the railroads if it were assured of the returns which the increased railroad earnings would give it. Sixth, rationalization of employment. An increasing number of the railroad labor leaders agree that the retirement of unneeded labor on pensions is essential. The older men should be pensioned, and as jobs increased with increased car loadings and train runs, many more of the younger men could find work.

This will not solve the railroad problem. But it will help rationalize it, and it will aid recovery. A permanent solution of the railroad problem must lie in government ownership. But a government which is not strong enough or resourceful enough to create a measure of rational order in the present railroad muddle is not likely to attempt the bigger job.

A Foreign Policy for America

RESULTS of *The Nation's* poll, tabulated on the next page, show isolation to have been rejected by progressive opinion among all groups and in all sections of the country. Out of a total of 9,263 signed ballots received, only 1,493—or less than one in six—subscribed to the general isolationist program which some of our Washington friends have declared represents the sentiment of the country. While no attempt was made to analyze the 4,000-odd unsigned ballots received, a cursory examination shows that they divide in approximately the same proportions. Readers of *The Nation* were particularly emphatic in opposing isolation, only 13 per cent voting for this policy. But, surprisingly enough, 82 per cent of the 6,816 non-readers of *The Nation* who voted concurred in this choice. The lists of persons to whom questionnaires were sent were carefully chosen to avoid bias. Although it is not possible to give the details regarding these lists, it can be stated that among them were lists obtained from at least three magazines which do not agree with *The Nation's* editorial position on foreign affairs and at least one large organization which is presumably isolationist in its outlook. Only one list, and that one of the smaller ones, was obtained from an organization whose members presumably favor collective security. Less than 150 votes were obtained from this source.

Sectionalism played a significantly small role in the returns. There was not a state in the Union in which the isolationist vote even approached that given to collective security. Six Midwestern states—Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and Wisconsin—cast 83 per cent of their ballots for collective action, which was almost identical with the vote in New York City. California was a little more emphatic than the average, with 86 per cent favoring international cooperation, while 84 per cent of the Alabama vote supported the same policy. In fact, the most striking characteristic of the vote is its consistency. Practically all of the states fall within an 80 to 88 per cent range favoring collective security.

Approximately 83 per cent of those favoring isolation as a method of keeping out of war felt that the present Neutrality Act does not supply sufficient guaranties of security for the United States. Only two-thirds of these, however, supported the proposal to stop all trade with belligerents, withdraw aid from American citizens in countries at war, and refuse to consult with other nations on ways to avoid war or end further conflict.

In view of the discouraging developments of the past few years, it seems surprising that nearly 40 per cent of all those voting favored American entry into the League of Nations. More than 70 per cent believed it necessary to collaborate, in joint or parallel action, with the major non-aggressive powers. An overwhelming majority of those favoring joint action—81 per cent—placed their faith in economic sanctions directed against

aggressors, but an almost equally large proportion—79 per cent—also favored economic support for the victims of aggression. A somewhat smaller number, but practically half of the total number voting, would carry concerted action to the point of threatening collective armed resistance to aggression.

Of all the specific proposals suggested as a means of checking the drift toward war, the reciprocal trade agreements and the consumer boycott received the greatest support. The boycott was strongly favored by both the supporters of isolation and of collective security, and rolled up a striking majority of 4 to 1 among all those casting their ballots. Unfortunately, no opportunity was given the participants to indicate whether they are themselves refraining from the purchase of Japanese goods.

At first glance the 5 to 1 vote for collective security seems, as one distinguished authority on international relations put it, "almost too good to be true." A number of opponents of collective action have charged that the questions were "loaded" so as to give a favorable result. After studying the criticisms together with several alternative sets of questions submitted by various other groups, we are convinced that this particular charge is not justified. While several of the questions might have been rephrased in the interest of clarity and others added to allow expression to some of the more important qualifications of attitude, there is no indication that the phrasing in any way affected the results. This is borne out by the fact that the National Lawyers' Guild poll with entirely different questions yielded almost identical results. It showed, for example, a 6 to 1 majority in favor of a revision of the Neutrality Act to permit the President and Congress, acting jointly, to distinguish between an aggressor and its victim. An almost identical majority approved of the use of economic measures to enforce the Kellogg-Briand pact. Most of the sample questionnaires submitted by other groups were devoted to an attempt to show that isolation is a "peace policy" and collective security a "war policy."

Next week we shall publish in our correspondence pages letters from critics of the poll as well as from persons who attached to their ballots expanded statements of their beliefs. So many of these were received that we shall attempt a classification of the varied opinions expressed; for these, too, form an interesting reflection of liberal attitudes on peace and American foreign policy.

The Nation poll does not presume to give a cross-section of general public opinion on these most vital of the questions facing the United States today. It does, however, indicate that there is a surprising unity in liberal opinion throughout the country on the necessity for some form of concerted action to check the drift toward war. It suggests that isolationism, if it was ever as strong as its advocates insisted, is definitely on the wane. And it provides a reassuring demonstration of faith in the feasibility of achieving peace through non-military means. An overwhelming majority upheld *The Nation* in the belief that economic sanctions, consumers' boycotts, and other pressures exerted by labor and unofficial groups may, if rigorously applied, yet stop the spread of war.

Final Tabulation of the Returns

I. In the long run, which offers the better insurance against war for this country—			
1. Isolation?	1,493	(16.1%) ¹	
2. A policy of cooperation with other nations in defense of peace?	7,770	(83.9%)	
A: ISOLATION			
II. If you favor isolation, do you believe that our present Neutrality Act, if applied, would supply sufficient guaranties of American security?			
	Yes 246 (17 %)	No 1,182 (83 %)	
III. If your vote on Question II is <i>No</i> , would you go beyond the Neutrality Act and stop all trade with belligerents, withdraw all aid from American citizens in countries at war, and refuse to consult with other nations on ways to avoid war or end further conflict? ²			
	Yes 850 (67 %)	No 418 (33 %)	
IV. Do you believe that a policy of isolation—			
1. Should be backed by a large increase in the army and navy?	495	(34.4%)	
2. Or should we depend chiefly on measures of economic non-intercourse to protect us from war?	944	(65.6%)	
B: COLLECTIVE SECURITY			
V. If you believe in collective action, what sort of commitments do you favor?			
1. Joining the League of Nations?	3,577		
2. Acting in common with other signatories to the Pact of Paris?	2,913		
3. Collaborating (through joint or parallel action), as occasion demands, with the major non-aggressive powers?	6,713		
VI. What sort of collective action do you advocate to check aggression?			
1. Economic measures directed against the offending power?	6,341		
2. Economic support for the victims of aggression?	6,014		
3. The threat of collective armed resistance to aggression?	4,605		
VII. The present Neutrality Act prevents economic cooperation with other nations to prevent or resist aggression. Would you favor—			
1. Repealing the act outright?	2,837	(39 %)	
2. Or amending it to permit economic aid to the victims of aggression?	4,449	(61 %)	
C: IN EITHER CASE			
VIII. Has the failure of the major democratic powers effectively to oppose the aggressions of Germany, Italy, and Japan weakened your belief in the possibility of collective action?			
	Yes 3,547 (40 %)	No 5,411 (60 %)	
IX. Has it caused you to direct your hopes for such action to non-official groups in all countries—particularly to labor and liberal and pacifist elements in the populations and the parliaments?			
	Yes 5,560 (66.7%)	No 2,764 (33.3%)	
X. Do you favor the application of voluntary popular boycotts to goods coming from nations engaged in aggressive warfare?			
	Yes 7,023 (79.8%)	No 1,831 (20.2%)	
XI. Do you believe that the United States should join in or support efforts to reduce the economic causes of friction by such means as—			
1. A redistribution of colonies?	3,005		
2. Reciprocal trade agreements?	7,771		
3. Cancellation of war debts?	3,845		
4. Stabilization of currencies?	6,145		
5. Relaxation of immigration restrictions?	2,879		
XII. Do you believe in a referendum on the question of a declaration of war by the United States?			
	Yes 3,754 (46.4%)	No 4,340 (53.6%)	

¹ Percentages are based on the number of replies received on the specific question.

² Apparently some voted on this question who did not vote no on Question II.

La Follette's Bid for Power

BY PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, May 2

IT IS much too early for a final judgment, but at this time and distance Phil La Follette's effort to launch a National Progressive Party looks and sounds like a dud. Because its practical tendency is to contribute to a reactionary triumph in 1940, it is causing alarm among progressives outside Wisconsin and bringing some comfort to the tory press at large. There is little reason to fear that either will be justified by events. It appears to be strictly a family enterprise, and one may question to what extent Bob's heart is in it, notwithstanding his public indorsement. My own conclusions on the subject have been reached with considerable reluctance, not to say pain, and I wish to preface them with certain items of fact. Among them perhaps the most revealing is that America's number one progressive was never consulted about the enterprise, and for his information concerning it has had to rely entirely on the newspapers. I allude, of course, to Senator Norris.

More important, however, are the facts of the general political situation which must be considered in appraising the "movement." It is fairly obvious now that out of the conflict over Roosevelt's main policies and objectives the country is moving rapidly toward a political realignment. The reactionary counter-attack on the New Deal is gathering force and fury. Unless some great diversion occurs, this conflict may be expected to produce a natural division between tories and progressives by 1940. The logic of the situation would seem to make Roosevelt the inevitable leader of the progressives. Time and future events may alter that, but nothing else can. When and if that natural division comes, the worst calamity which could overtake the progressives' cause would be a division in their own ranks. Practical reactionaries know that. It is no surprise when the *Washington Post* welcomes Phil's progressivism as the simon-pure brand. If he were not recognized as a potential ally he would be derided or ignored.

The impending realignment, with its natural economic basis, will be the most wholesome political development in United States politics since Lincoln founded the Republican Party. Possessing the ballot, the people have been helpless while the nation's wealth was plundered under cover of the sham battle waged by the old parties. No one knew that better than the elder La Follette, who risked his life in 1924 to effect such a realignment. Risked it literally, because his doctor told him his heart probably would not survive the campaign—and it didn't for very long. He had no hope of achieving more than an honest and natural division between progressives and reactionaries; he told me so the night he concluded his campaign at Cleveland; but he was willing to die for

his hope. Now it is being realized, and with a speed and finality for which few of us dared hope a year ago. More, it is being realized under circumstances which are full of promise of a progressive victory. What sheer, heart-breaking tragedy it would be if progressive victory were turned into defeat through the misguided zeal of the Old Battler's son! Especially for the son himself.

As I said earlier, this subject is painful, and I strain to be clear. The La Follettes are always brave, always sincere, always incorruptible. To Phil and Bob public service is a religion which they have practiced with faith and gallantry. Moreover, as an academic proposition, it is easy to admit that their brand of progressivism is superior to Roosevelt's. Unfortunately, that is not the issue in this situation, as it might be in a more civilized age. The immediate prospect is that we are going to have Roosevelt's or none. The choice is not between Roosevelt and La Follette; it is between Roosevelt on one hand and Ford, Girdler, and the National Association of Manufacturers on the other. At least, that is how the choice presents itself now.

We might, indeed, go farther and say it is a choice between Roosevelt's adulterated progressivism and the Ford-Girdler brand of fascism. Can anyone contemplate the elements now rallying against the New Deal, and still doubt what kind of government we shall have if those forces triumph in 1940? Not I; I have heard too much of the testimony before Bob's civil liberties committee in the last year. Grant all the New Deal's imperfections—of what use will the counsels of perfection be when the tanks and machine-guns are in the streets and public squares of New York, Chicago, and Detroit, as they were in Washington in July, 1932? The logic of the situation is inescapable, and it transcends personalities and counsels of perfection alike.

Even if that were not the case, the fact would remain that Phil's performance at Madison was distinctly hammy. The idea of the cross-and-circle symbol was too palpably borrowed from the fasces and the swastika, and there were passages in the speech which sounded like a combination of Hitler, Hoover, Huey Long, and Billy Sunday. Containing much that was obviously true, it did not hang together. "The Republican Party is bankrupt," and the Democrats are so reactionary that "even such attempts to move forward as the Administration has made have torn the party apart." To whom, then, does Phil appeal? To "the rank and file of both parties . . . composed of fine, patriotic men and women." If that means anything it means that he is appealing to the elements in both parties which already recognize Roosevelt as their leader. It just won't do. Phil's time may come (personally, I hope it will be Bob's), but this isn't it.

Finally, talk of a "National Progressive Party" which discards the New Deal and ignores Norris, LaGuardia, and John L. Lewis strikes me, from a practical standpoint, as childish nonsense, redeemed only by the fact that it is too childish to be very dangerous.

If it is true that procedural errors have endangered the government's cases against Ford and Republic Steel, the Labor Board's legal department, by its own confession, stands convicted of inexcusable negligence. It would seem that it remained for the Supreme Court (in the Kansas City stockyards decision) to call the board's attention to the necessity of complying with certain elementary requirements. If, as now appears, these included the opportunity to meet allegations, offer exceptions, and present argument to the board itself, and not merely before trial examiners, they were fundamental as well as elementary. All the trial examiners I have seen in action

were competent lawyers and sympathetic to the purposes of the law. But they are not responsible officials in the final sense that the board members are. What chance would a labor union have before a trial examiner appointed by the same kind of Administration which made Gaston B. Means an agent of the Department of Justice? Nobody who is familiar with the record in the Ford and Republic cases can have much doubt about their guilt. By the same token any procedural errors which endanger those cases are doubly reprehensible.

If admissions of the board's counsel mean what they seem to convey, it is that professional incompetence or carelessness has placed new ammunition in the hands of stooge columnists and peanut politicians at a time when they need it badly to curry favor with their patrons by misleading the public. Senator Burke can now use three Senate mimeographs, instead of one, to print the propaganda which he is sending out under his frank.

The Rise of David Dubinsky

BY McALISTER COLEMAN

I
ON A Sunday morning when the spring sunshine brings New York's East Side on to the streets you may perhaps see a stocky little man pedaling a bicycle methodically along Second Avenue. He does it with the concentrated air of one bent on self-improvement. He looks neither to right nor left as friends among the garment workers on the sidewalks call out, "Hello, D. D."

This will be David Dubinsky, keeping down the encroachments of a middle-aged waist line and getting set for another week of strenuous grappling with bosses, grievance-bearing members of his own rank and file, novice politicians of the American Labor Party, and a thousand and one perplexing questions connected with obtaining peace in the labor movement. Sidewalk strollers note that, for all the traffic hazards, the bicycle keeps pretty consistently in the middle of the wide avenue.

To the fast-growing group of journalists who have discovered gold among the labor hills the president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union is a distinct disappointment. The bright young men from *Time* march on from Dubinsky's office with few of those human-interest items that jazz up their amazing interpretations of the world of labor. Photographers assigned to I. L. G. W. U. conventions usually pass up the bland Dubinsky for the disordered locks and black ties of Luigi Antonini or the stern visage of Julius Hochman. Dubinsky's cherubic countenance has no resemblance to the pictures of the hard-bitten union chiefs upon which the public has been taught to gaze with mingled awe and apprehension.

Those persons, however, who see in labor leaders something more than colorful material for "personality copy" know that Dubinsky's small figure looms with increasing importance above the labor scene. They know that his mixture of shrewd opportunism and a carefully measured idealism is a factor to be reckoned with in any just appraisal of the current movement. Dubinsky's enemies, of whom he has a generous number, speak sneeringly of his "shifty pacifism," of his "countless compromises and evasions," of his "essential glibness." But friends and enemies alike admit that there is in the little man an amazing energy, driven by a first-rate intelligence, that takes him to strategic places never reached by more spectacular leadership.

He stood in one of these places a year ago when he welcomed John L. Lewis to that Atlantic City Auditorium where two years before, at the historic convention of the American Federation of Labor, Lewis had waged his losing fight for industrial unionism. On the later occasion, at Dubinsky's signal, a thousand delegates to the I. L. G. W. U.'s twenty-third convention jumped up and cheered as the mine leader stepped out to thank the international for its part in building the Committee for Industrial Organization. Lewis knew and Dubinsky knew that, with the miners, the garment workers—makers of men's and women's clothes alike—had furnished the bulk of the funds and the pick of the organizers that had sent the C. I. O. victoriously into rubber and glass and automobiles and steel. There was plenty to cheer about at that convention. The recession was not yet in sight, business was brisk in the garment trades, recalcitrant employers were signing contracts, union treasuries were full. And

the psychological barriers that seemed to stand between Lewis and Dubinsky were down, for the time being at any rate. Though here and there the movement had met a check, nothing, it seemed in those May days, could stop the onward march of the C. I. O.

"We come to this convention," said Dubinsky, "representing 240,000 members in 236 chartered locals and 21 joint boards and district councils located in 24 states and in Puerto Rico as well as in four provinces in Canada." Gains of 40,000 members since the Chicago convention of 1934 were proudly recorded. Here was an organization of workers larger in size, greater in scope, than any unit of the employers with which it dealt, an organization charged with the economic welfare and security of more than a million men, women, and children, an organization which had come up through the worst of the country's industrial jungles.

Among those who listened to Dubinsky's report were many old-timers who could remember when they went out on the fire-escapes of New York sweatshops in the brief breathing-spells granted from the whirl of the machines and talked union. In those days, before the turn of the century, the young men's talk of organization brought a smile to the lips of older skeptics. "We have tried union," they assured the eager youngsters, "and it does no good. Take what you can get and don't let the boss hear you talk union around here." But they were tenacious, these youngsters, and they were idealists. I do not mean that they were the yearning revolt-shouters of the standardized labor pageant. They were too tired for posturing. Swallowing their morning tea in the windowless back room of a tenement, hurrying through empty streets gray under river fog, climbing steep stairs to the shop, bending at once to the compulsions of their machines, working fifty, sixty, seventy hours a week for a six-dollar wage—they were in no mood for heroics. They were young, though, and had a lust for life. They saw how quickly the machines had drained from the elders the fine hopes and high dreams that had brought them first to these hostile streets. They turned from the fire-escapes and went back to the foul rooms, resolved that somehow, collectively, they would find the way out of this man-trap.

"We have a right to claim," Dubinsky said, "that our union has become strong not merely through its economic gains but by virtue of the idealism and solidarity fostered by our educational and cultural activity."

Exportation of inhabitants who exhibit the wrong sort of idealism has long been a practice of European nations. In the early eighties the Jews of Poland, Lithuania, Austria, Germany, and Russia were fleeing the pogroms and police persecutions of their homelands. Tailors from Rumania, revolutionists from Riga, young intellectuals from Odessa, little business men from a hundred ghettos crowded the rails of liners as they came into New York harbor. In the twenty years from 1880 to 1900 nearly 600,000 Jewish immigrants passed through Ellis Island, the majority of them headed straight for the garment centers. In New York's swarming Tenth Ward, under the latticed shadows of the elevated, these workers moved

in a world of their own as completely beyond the pale as though they had never left Kiev or Odessa. Their few words of English were well-nigh unintelligible bits of trade jargon. Most of them clung to Talmudic tradition and looked with suspicion on the young revolutionaries as proselytizing Christian missionaries.

The epic story of how that unlikely lump was leavened by the pioneer organizers—Abraham Cahan, Meyer London, Morris Hillquit, Jacob Panken, Benjamin Feigenbaum, and others—is told in Lewis L. Lorwin's "The Women's Garment Workers," the official history of the I. L. G. W. U. In June of 1900, the year that Eugene Debs was nominated for President by the new Socialist Party of America, a group of tailors, arguing as tailors have argued since the first bearskin was sewed together, met at the Labor Lyceum in New York. There eleven courageous delegates, representing seven clothing groups in New York, Newark, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, voted to organize a national union of all workers in the women's garment industry. They took the hopeful, if ponderous, name of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

Eleven years after that momentous meeting David Dubinsky arrived at the Battery. He was nineteen years old and a veteran revolutionist. Born in Brest-Litovsk, Poland, the son of an owner of a bakeshop, little David had entered enthusiastically into the local labor movement at Lodz, where his family moved when he was an infant. Although unions were tolerated in Russian Poland, they were so closely watched by the police that most of their activities had to be conducted underground. David, an apprentice in his father's shop, was an energetic union official and led two strikes of the Bakers' Union. He was arrested and forced to leave Lodz. At sixteen he was one of the chief organizers of a general strike of bakers. Again arrested, he served eighteen months in prison and was exiled to Siberia in 1909, the year of the first great strike of the New York dress-makers. Five months later he escaped, and after working for a while with the underground movement in Russia, he finally headed for America.

As soon as he landed, the innocent-looking, pink-cheeked youth, with alert eyes beneath a high forehead, went straight to Socialist and labor headquarters. His older brother was a business agent of the Bakers' Union, Local 100, and David soon made friends with the leaders of the movement in New York. After working for a time as a knee-pants operator, he was admitted in the summer of 1911 to membership in Local 10, the powerful cutters' division of the I. L. G. W. U., bearing a letter of introduction from Benjamin Schlesinger, for whom he was to act as labor lieutenant for so many stormy years.

Schlesinger, like Dubinsky, had learned his revolutionary lessons in Russia. Working in Chicago in the first days of the international, he had risen rapidly through the union ranks and in 1903 reached the presidency of the I. L. G. W. U. In those days, following the example of most European laborites, Schlesinger stressed his socialist philosophy in all his union activities. In his reports

to conventions he roundly damned the two old parties and recommended the discussion of socialism throughout the union. He had gathered around him a group of young militants who were impatient at the caution of the old-timers and enraged by the snobbishness of the native-born workers. With these "new men" Dubinsky went to work to adapt to American conditions the Socialist program of industrial unionism, public ownership, and the eventual abolition of the profit system. He rose quickly—to the executive board of the cutters in 1919, to the vice-presidency in 1920, and to the presidency in 1921.

In these years he was looking well beyond the cutting table into the intricacies of an industry where often the making of clothes is a casual by-product of the major processes of planned inefficiency, large-scale waste, and economic aberrations which dizzy the economist. The demands of what Lewis Mumford has called "the ritual of luxury" bear heavily on all transactions connected with the manufacture of women's clothes. The style tempo is swift and unpredictable, and woe to him who has not caught its rhythm. No other industrialists or workers are at the mercies of so implacable and whimsical a market as the women's garment manufacturers and workers. When this ritual is complicated by the feverish competition of employers with a sweatshop conception of their industry, the whole business takes on a lunatic aspect. Although by comparison with the underpaid operators Dubinsky's skilled cutters enjoyed some measure of security (they were regarded enviously as the aristocrats of the garment trade), they were as deeply concerned as the most sweated learner with the elimination of the swarms of parasitic middlemen and the modernization of

this "cottage industry." Among garment workers there was no debating the central thesis of industrial unionism—"An injury to one is an injury to all."

More and more it was with the everyday problems posed by the peculiar set-up of the garment trade rather than with larger and vaguer social philosophies that Dubinsky and the "new men" were occupied. Because the bosses had no will to clean house, the union had to tackle the job. And to this task it summoned, not without heated protest on the part of the old-timers, creative persons from outside the union. Economists, research workers, production engineers, lawyers to draft codes, publicity men to interpret the aims of the international to the consumer—these mingled with the workers at union headquarters and sat with them in conference with the employers. The heroism shown by the rank and file in their pioneer struggles had had an emotional appeal for all liberal America. Now the less spectacular struggle for elementary industrial civilization engaged the interest of such outstanding personalities as Jane Addams, Charles Barnes, Otto Beyer, Robert Bruère, Morris Cooke, Zona Gale, Norman Hapgood, Florence Kelley, the La Follettes, William Leiserson, Julian Mack, Marcus Marks, William Z. Ripley, Raymond Robins, Oswald Garrison Villard, Brand Whitlock, Stephen Wise, Lillian Wald. Although this connection with outside intellectuals was viewed with apprehension by the Gomperites in the A. F. of L., who privately lamented the day they had admitted the international to their fold, it served to plant the union firmly in American soil. And it played its important part in the education of a young labor leader.

[Part II of this article will appear next week.]

Is Inflation Coming?

BY KEITH HUTCHISON

ONE of the worst effects of Germany's monetary collapse after the war has been its legacy of muddle-headed thinking. The German experience caused "inflation" to become a press catchword with a connotation of mysterious wickedness and surrounded it with a mist of fear. In the years since, continual loose usage has brought such an accretion of meanings that inflation is now applied to almost any kind of government action of a stimulative nature. It has thus become a useful missile for those to hurl who have found that "socialism" and "collectivism" have lost some of their power to terrorize. It arouses a sense of guilt, suggests the perils of departure from the strait path, appeals to those masochistic instincts which every religion, including the religion of capitalism, has sought to harness to its ends.

It was therefore only to be expected that when the President announced his new spending program, half a hundred publicists would reach for this portentous ab-

straction; it was a safe bet that General Hugh Johnson would use it more wildly than anyone else. Even after "time to cool off and observe the horrendous thing with at least a moderate temperature," he was able to conjure up for his readers such hobgoblins as "French assignats, the depreciation of the Russian ruble, the German mark, and our Continental and Confederate currencies. In these cases wealth in the form of money became as worthless as second-hand wallpaper." Without stopping to consider whether there was the slightest similarity between the economic circumstances in which these deplorable happenings occurred and our present situation, the General plunged on: "When people fear this they want to get rid of their money and turn it into wealth in the form of goods or common stocks as quickly as possible. A panic buyers' market results. All prices go through the ceiling. . . . People who depend on wages, salaries, pensions, or life insurance see the buying power of their incomes cut to fractions. This is 'inflation' in

its most sinister sense." Agreed, General. But what has this to do with the situation in America today?

Suppose there were a rush for goods now, what would happen? There is no shortage—in fact, one of our chief troubles is the swollen state of inventories. It would take a powerful amount of buying to bring these down to normal proportions, and until that happened, there would not be much rise in prices. Meanwhile manufacturers, seeing stocks dwindling and customers in the offing, would start idle machinery, reemploy idle men. Would this be a cause for terror?

The truth is that the root cause of inflation is not over-supply of money or credit but scarcity of goods. Inflation is the result of famine, not abundance. Germany's disastrous experience began during the war when its productive capacity was stretched to the utmost to supply its armies. Hence the steady expansion in currency and credit to finance the war could not be offset by a further increase in goods. When peace came, the nation's machinery was worn out, its stocks of food and raw materials exhausted, and its credit vanished. The exactions of the Allies prevented any revival in production and rendered inevitable the paper chase toward bankruptcy. Examination of other runaway inflations would reveal a similar picture, always with a background of war and revolution. I do not know of any instance in history in which inflation coincided with a large potential capacity for the production of both raw materials and finished goods such as America possesses today.

The more intelligent opponents of pump-priming will admit this. But, they insist, this only means we may continue to live in a fool's paradise for a few months or years; in the end Nemesis will catch us. This suggests that the avenging goddess is around the next corner but one, and that before she jumps out at us we may expect a pleasant interlude with Fortuna. For if inflation results only from the attempt further to expand activities after the factors of production are fully engaged, we must, before plunging into it, attain a level of prosperity considerably higher than that of 1929. Can it be that the President's critics, in their efforts to damn his program, are in fact ascribing to it possibilities of success beyond the wildest hopes of his supporters?

There are, of course, cynics who hint that what business fears is not a boom in itself, but a boom for which the President could claim political credit. Let us allow our high-toned columnists, our public-spirited editors, worthier motives for refusing to indulge in tainted prosperity! The emotional vehemence with which they reject unsound methods entitles them to be credited with acting on moral rather than on political grounds. Fearful that too rich a meal will give the country indigestion, they praise the healthful qualities of dry bread. In the eternal conflict between asceticism and physical satisfaction they have chosen the way of St. Simeon Stylites and invited us to come up and see them some time. Psychiatrists would doubtless describe such behavior as masochism—a delight in pain for its own sake. Before we decide to adopt this interesting perversion it might be well to take a more careful look at the pump-priming

program and see if it really has such hell-raising potentialities. Perhaps, after all, there may be no occasion to revel in cramps on the pillar of financial rectitude in company with General Johnson, to kneel fasting before the idol of "Sound Money" alongside Dorothy Thompson, or to join the editor of the *New York Times* in flagellations honoring that indefinable deity the "Balanced Budget."

IS CREDIT EXPANSION JUSTIFIABLE?

According to the *Financial Chronicle*: "The gold de-sterilization is in itself a dangerous invitation to unbridled inflation. . . . The promised reduction in reserve requirements is even more startling. . . . Excess reserves in the current banking statistics are estimated at \$1,730,000,000. Gold de-sterilization will add \$1,400,000,000 to that figure, and another \$750,000,000 is to be poured in on top of that, making excess reserves of something like \$3,800,000,000, probably before very long." Other critics see nothing inflationary in the credit-expansion program; on the contrary, they find it adds nothing to purchasing power and dismiss it as so much window-dressing. In my opinion both these objections show misunderstanding of the real purpose of credit expansion at this time, which is to check deflation in the security markets and to prepare the ground for the government financing which will become necessary as the pump-priming program develops.

Reduction in the proportion of reserves which banks must hold against deposits means an enlargement of resources, unable at present to find employment except in public bonds and bills. Prices have risen sharply in the bond market, while the rates on short-term bills, already very low, have been shaved still further. The addition of the de-sterilized gold to the active balance of the Treasury not only means that current expenses will be met for some time without fresh borrowing but makes possible the retirement of a considerable amount of short-term debt during the next two months. Thus, with the supply of investment paper diminishing, a steady rise in government bonds may be expected. Three advantages accrue. Investors will be encouraged to turn to better-yielding industrial bonds, and investment markets generally will benefit. With money available at cheaper rates entrepreneurs will be more inclined to borrow for plant expansion; the scheme which seemed not worth while when $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent had to be paid for a loan may offer a margin of profit at a $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent rate. Finally, the Treasury has maturing notes totaling over \$1,600,000,000 to meet before the end of the year. If the bond market can be kept strong, it will be able to refinance this amount at a lower average rate, as well as raise new money at less expense if, as is probable, this becomes necessary in the fall.

However uncomfortable cheap money may be for bankers and *rentiers*, it is not in itself inflationary. We are told that interest rates are already abnormally low, but this is a case where thinking makes it so. There is no norm for interest rates which holds good under all conditions. Capital is also subject to the laws of supply

and demand, and in an advanced industrial country, where opportunities for investment are declining, there is a secular downward trend in interest rates. Barring war, revolution, or catastrophes destroying capital on a large scale, it is by no means impossible that eventually they will reach zero, or even become negative. This prospect is naturally terrifying to economic masochists, who fear the foundations of economic morality would be undermined were abstinence no longer to receive a reward.

The question of whether the total volume of credit is dangerously large must remain an academic one until economic activity more nearly approaches its optimum. In any case there is not the slightest truth in the suggestion that the car has been started off without brakes. It is always open to the Federal Reserve Board to raise reserve requirements again; it can sell securities in the open market, which by curtailing deposits similarly reduces the volume of credit; it can allow gold to flow out of the country if a rise in the price level here causes weakness in the dollar; it can increase the rediscount rate. The greatest danger is not that the brakes will prove ineffective but that they will be jammed on too suddenly. This is very much what happened a year ago. Forgetting the time lag, the Administration, finding no immediate response to its efforts to slow things down, put all its weight on the pedal and was surprised to find the car stalled. Next time it seems desirable to check economic momentum, let us hope the curbs available will be used with more restraint.

IS THERE A DANGER OF NATIONAL BANKRUPTCY?

Government management of credit is abhorrent to our economic masochists: even more so is the unbalanced budget. The latter is a matter, too, about which it is easier to alarm the man in the street, who is apt to personalize the Treasury situation. Most of us have been brought up with a horror of running into debt, with an acute sense of the danger of living beyond our income. Hence we feel that such practices on the part of the nation as a whole must be immoral and risky.

To get this problem into perspective requires a consideration of the debt burden in relation to other economic factors. On March 31 the gross federal debt was approximately \$37,000,000,000—about 54.4 per cent of the national income last year. But our capacity to produce goods and services, as estimated by the Brookings Institution, was \$97,500,000,000 in 1929. If anything like this figure were attained, the relative burden of the debt would fall sharply even though pump-priming added several billions to it. On the other hand, should national income decline again to the 1932 level—as it probably would if a thoroughgoing deflationary and budget-balancing program were attempted—the relative burden would rise to 93 per cent. Similarly the load of taxation can only be realistically considered if it is related to national income. Federal, state, and local taxes are at present estimated at around \$10,000,000,000, less than 15 per cent of the national income in 1937. If income were pushed to the limit, there would be a decrease

in the real weight of taxation even though the actual gross amount were increased.

It is interesting to compare these figures with those of Britain, often held out by our orthodox mentors as a model of financial rectitude. Britain's debt, excluding defaulted American loans, is nearly \$39,000,000,000—more than America's even though the population that must carry it is only about one-third as great. Britain's national income last year is estimated at \$26,000,000,000; so that the relative debt burden is 150 per cent! Moreover, British local and national taxes, even before the additions provided in the new budget, absorbed some 22 per cent of the national income.

Actually Britain, for all its "sound" finance, is a great deal nearer inflation and bankruptcy than America. It has a much smaller margin of unused productive capacity, and with an aging population soon due to start declining absolutely, its prospects of raising national income much above its present level are decidedly slim. Armaments are now absorbing practically all surplus production normally available for capital requirements. Before long Britain, like Germany, will have to choose between guns and butter. It is therefore nonsense to suggest, as the *New York Times* in its editorial comment on the British budget suggested, that because Britain's actual current deficit is "negligible compared with our own" it is in a much stronger position.

Of course we must recognize that to a "sound" economic thinker a deficit incurred for armaments has a righteousness all its own. It is as moral as castor oil—tastes bad when you take it and gives you a hell of a stomach-ache later. Borrowing for armaments has for the masochist a natural appeal entirely lacking in borrowing for public works. Opposition to the navy bill in business circles has been singularly hard to discover. When it is a matter of death, thrift must take a back seat. But to spend for a fuller life, to borrow to promote health—that shows a lack of moral fiber, a deterioration of character.

During the preliminary discussions on the pump-priming proposals, there was strong support in Administration circles for the inclusion of a large-scale health program, for which an almost perfect case exists, not merely on purely social but also on economic grounds. The recent report of the Technical Committee on Medical Care pointed out that a billion days of work were lost each year through sickness, and estimated the annual cost of illness and premature death at \$10,000,000,000. The possibilities for investment in this field are enormous. There is room for a vast extension of the present preventive service and for hundreds of clinics and hospitals. The committee showed that 18,000,000 people were living in counties without hospital facilities and suggested that at least 500 hospitals could be usefully built in rural areas. The expenditure of a billion dollars over the next few years on a comprehensive health program would be a direct contribution to the wealth of the country. If it succeeded in cutting the annual cost of sickness only 5 per cent, it would mean a 50 per cent profit.

The plan has gone into cold storage; no doubt because

it was too sane to be politically feasible. But it serves to illustrate the topsy-turvy thinking of those who see in expenditure of this kind nothing but a step toward financial ruin. The real measure of the national deficit is not the amount by which the Treasury fails to cover current

expenditure by current income. It is rather the vastly greater amount by which the nation as a whole fails to achieve a full return from its capital equipment—that is to say, the amount by which actual production falls short of potential production.

Russia and Karl Marx

BY REINHOLD NIEBUHR

IT WILL probably be some years before we shall have authentic knowledge of the social and political facts which underlie the periodic trials in Moscow and the recurrent purges, including Stalin's most recent and highly significant "purge of the purgers" on the collective farms. Until further knowledge is available, discussion of the credibility of the official version of these events will be largely unprofitable because varying opinions will either be, or seem to be, dictated by previously established presuppositions in regard to Russia. In the meantime it may be profitable to outline certain conclusions, of great importance to social and political theory, which are substantiated by the trials however they are interpreted and are equally valid whether one regards Stalin as a sadistic tyrant or as the heroic defender of a revolution against criminal conspirators. These conclusions concern the Marxian estimate of the nature of the state on the one hand and of human nature on the other. The social and political facts revealed by the Moscow trials seriously challenge the Marxian interpretation of the state as an instrument of class domination which will wither away in a classless society; they also throw doubt upon the Marxian analysis of human nature which not only is implied in the state theory but has been explicitly expressed.

For the purpose of disarming the reader who is generally sympathetic with a Marxian interpretation of politics it may be wise to observe that in the opinion of the present writer Marxism is an essentially correct theory and analysis of the economic realities of modern society. It is correct in its analysis of the unavoidable conflict between owners and workers in an industrial society, correct in regarding private ownership of the means of production as the basic cause of periodic crises and technological unemployment, and correct in its insistence that the communal ownership of the productive process is a basic condition of social health in a technical age. It may underestimate the biological, racial, and spiritual factors in imperialism, but it is certainly not wrong in holding capitalism responsible for the economic imperialism in which every advanced industrial nation is inevitably involved. All these affirmations of Marxist social theory are made dogmatically—without effort to validate them against contending theories—for the purpose of dissociating the intended criticism of the Marxist theories of the state and of human nature from a general criticism of Marxism.

The Marxian theory of the state is very simple. The state is the instrument of class oppression. It will therefore disappear with the disappearance of classes. "In the course of its development," declares Marx, "the working class will replace the old bourgeois society . . . and there will no longer be any real political power, for political power is precisely the official expression of class antagonisms in bourgeois society." Lenin, proclaiming the same faith, says, "We do not expect the advent of an order of society in which the principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed. But striving for socialism, we are convinced that it will develop into communism . . . all need for force will vanish, and for the subjection of one man to another, and one part of the population to another, since people will grow accustomed to observing the elementary conditions of social existence without force and without subjection." One might multiply such citations indefinitely. They all look forward to a kind of anarchistic Utopia, despite the explicit disavowals of utopianism that are found in Marxism.

Obviously the crucial point in this interpretation of the function of force in society is that it is regarded not as a necessity of social cohesion but simply as an instrument of class oppression. This implies that human egoism is not congenital but merely the product of a particular class organization of society. Nothing is more paradoxical in Marxian theory than that it prompts its adherents to a cynically realistic analysis of human motives in the present instance and yet persuades them to look forward to a paradise of brotherhood after the revolution. For the period after the revolution every orthodox Marxian is a liberal. The eighteenth-century faith in the perfectibility of man is expressed with the greater abandon for having been tentatively veiled and qualified.

The probability is that this whole interpretation of the place of force in society is wrong. Every society uses a degree of coercion in achieving cohesion for the simple reason that the human imagination is too limited and egoistic impulses are too powerful for purely voluntary cooperation on a large scale to be attained. Inevitably the force which society uses for this purpose will seek to serve itself more than society. No matter how general the consent which maintains it, the actual social locus from which the initiative of coercion is taken is narrower than the whole of society. Hence in every society there is some-

thing like an oligarchy. The best a democratic society can do is to prevent the oligarchy from becoming hereditary and self-perpetuating and to maintain the right of constant surveillance over its exercise of power. The evils of the capitalist oligarchy are due to the fact that its power, being derived from mere ownership of property, is essentially irresponsible and self-perpetuating. It may be partly checked by political power, but it is usually strong enough to bend those who hold the political power to its will.

The elimination of such an oligarchy from society does not eliminate the necessity of coercion. The new oligarchy may be primarily political rather than economic; but when the goods of society are owned in common, the political leadership may easily hold the economic power also. The rise of an oligarchy in Russia is not due, as Trotsky alleges, to the perfidy of Stalin. It was inevitable. But Trotsky is surely right when he points out that it is the tendency of such a class to arrogate special privileges to itself. Every class which performs a special function in society will claim the privileges that are necessary for the proper performance of its function, and since it has the decision, will make a very generous estimate of what it requires. Events in Russia prove that the state is not so much derived from class domination as class domination is derived from the necessities of the state.

The orthodox Marxian has a simple answer for these criticisms. He will declare that one must not confuse the dictatorship of the proletariat with the ultimate communist society. He will call attention to the fact that Lenin envisaged that paradox "a bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie" until men shall have learned "elementary rules of social behavior." This phrase, a bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie, is a neat indication of the basic error of Marxism—its identification of human egoism with the capitalist social structure. The Marxian will allow the dictatorship to continue until the last vestiges of capitalist mentality are rooted out. He does not admit that egoistic impulses spring perennially from every human heart. This does not mean that it is not possible to construct an economic order which by its very mechanism will make for mutuality among men. Our social mechanisms may aggravate or mitigate human egoism and the conflict of wills in society. But they will not create men of such universal perspectives that they will make identical interpretations of what life is and ought to be.

The Moscow trials are tragic revelations of this error in the Marxian interpretation of human nature and of the state. Is it not this error which requires the ruling oligarchy to prove that its foes are covert fascists and capitalists? The kind of opposition they offered is inconceivable in terms of the Marxian theory. The dictatorship exists in theory to suppress capitalist foes, not to suppress communists who have other goals and principles than the ruling faction. Real communists, on the basis of identical economic interests, would all think more or less alike. If they do not think alike, the non-conformists are *ipso facto* capitalists—except of course

for the dissenter who is in Mexico rather than under the heel of the oligarchy.

Stalin's power is a double refutation of the Marxian theory of the state. The fact that the power is necessary refutes the Trotskyists, who regard the growth of an oligarchy in Russia as merely the fruit of Stalin's perfidy. Every society must finally define its course and assert its will not only against foreign foes but against dissenters within its own household. In a socialist society such dissent is derived not merely from remnants of capitalist ideology but from varying interpretations of the purpose and program of socialism made by different schools of Marxist thought. In so far as the conflict between Stalin and his foes is a conflict between absolutists and relativists, one is inclined to prefer Stalin's relativism and compromise to the unstatesmanlike absolutism of Trotsky. The instincts of self-preservation within a great community will generate an irrefutable logic of their own against which doctrinaire creeds are powerless. In exactly the same way French ideals of a bourgeois world revolution were compounded with patriotism in the period after the French Revolution.

But the degree of Stalin's power, its irresponsible and autocratic character, refutes the Marxian theory of the state in another sense. The Marxian thesis that the state will wither away after the capitalist enemies of socialism are destroyed prompts Marxists to maximize the power of the state and to relax ordinary human precautions against the exercise of irresponsible power. Since the state is involved in a process of self-destruction, it is believed that its power can safely be increased. This power will supposedly enhance the efficiency of the Communist community in defeating its internal and external foes; and when this has been done, the state will wither away.

The fatal error in this reasoning is the assumption that conflict within a community and the expression of dissident opinion can come only from the remnants of the capitalist mentality. The Marxian does not understand that any and every community in human history, given the limitations of the human mind and the egoistic impulses of the human heart, will have difficulty in arriving at a common mind and a general will, and must therefore achieve unity partly by suppressing dissidence and coercing recalcitrant minorities. Once this perennial necessity of coercion is recognized, it is possible to be vigilant against its perennial perils. Every government is tempted to confuse its own prejudices with the general welfare and to corrupt its rule by the lust for power. "All power corrupts," declared Lord Acton quite truly, "and absolute power corrupts absolutely." The validity of this observation escapes utopians, who imagine that they have found a way to eliminate power and coercion from society. Hence they allow the power of their state to grow unduly, vainly imagining that the heart which beats under the tunic of a commissar is of different stuff from the hearts of ancient kings and potentates. The tragic consequence of this miscalculation is that what purposed to be the realization of Marx's dream of a "free association of workers" turns out to be a community governed by a particularly vexatious tyranny.

Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

IN THE horror of what has happened in Austria there is one bright spot, and that is the admirable conduct of our American diplomatic officials there. Every American has a right to be proud of the courage and humanity displayed by all of them, notably by the chargé d'affaires, John C. Wiley. It is reported that the minister of another great democracy promptly bolted when the Germans marched in, and left his legation to subordinates. As we had no minister in Vienna at the time, the whole burden fell upon Mr. Wiley. One of the most experienced of our younger diplomats, he refused to be bound by red tape or purely nationalistic restrictions, and as a result he did an enormous amount of good, saved many unfortunates, I am sure, and ameliorated the lot of many others. He was not overawed by the Nazis or afraid of them, and that is just the right attitude to take toward these brutal bluffers. He and his small staff have been simply overwhelmed by the thousands of poor Jews, and Gentiles too, who have sought to get visas to come to the United States. I wish there were some way of giving men who do work of this type a distinguished-service medal. Mr. Wiley has certainly earned it.

He would, I believe, be the first to say that he did no more than was expected of him according to the traditions of our service, and in that he would be right. Hundreds of persons call the present Assistant Secretary of State, George S. Messersmith, blessed for the magnificent work he did in Berlin when Hitler took power there. I have had men tell me with tears in their eyes that they felt they owed their lives to his tireless energy and willingness to forget everything except the appeal of one human being to another for aid in escaping from an unearned and a terrible fate. From Paris has come a remarkable letter from a foreigner expressing his gratitude and admiration for the extraordinary courtesy and kindness with which his personal request for aid and counsel was received at the embassy there. Strictly speaking, the American diplomatic service can concern itself only with American citizens, but it is a great piece of good fortune that in a crisis it does let humane instincts overrule the exact letter of the regulations. It isn't possible to go into details here, but I may say that the American legation in Vienna, now the American consulate, stood out above all others in those first horrible days. I have this from competent and trustworthy observers who were there during the whole time and have just arrived in this country.

I am the happier to record this, which is something all Americans ought to know, because of the growing criticism one hears, notably in Washington, of some of the permanent diplomatic officials. There is always the danger that career men will become routinized, opinion-

ated, and hidebound. I could name several of this type, but it is not true of the bulk of the men that I know in the service. I have never in all my travels experienced anything but the greatest courtesy and kindness from our diplomats. Perhaps our career service is too new to have become bureaucratic and for its members to fail to realize that they are still, however secure in their jobs, the servants of the American public. I have before now expressed my anxiety lest this come to pass, for I remember so well what was brought out about the English diplomatic service by a parliamentary commission which was inquiring into the inbreeding and dry-rot with which it was afflicted, at the very moment when the World War broke out. Francis Hirst, the British economist and editor, testified at that time that he had presented a letter of introduction to the first secretary of the Vienna legation. That official asked what he could do for him, and Mr. Hirst said he would like to meet the burgomaster of Vienna, who was then playing a most important role in the Socialist movement of Southeastern Europe. The English first secretary looked perfectly blank when the burgomaster's name was mentioned. On Hirst's telling him who the man was, he seemed very much relieved. "Oh," said he, "we leave all those political matters to the correspondent of the *London Times*."

Of course the trouble with the British service then was that most of its members were not only Oxford men but Balliol men. They were either titled or in expectation of titles or related to titles, and were men of means. Filled with class prejudice, they had been taught the old diplomacy and nothing else. Such conditions can never be duplicated in this country. The method of appointment to our service forbids that, and there is no requirement in regard to private means, which is as it should be. This is all the more reason why Congress should change its attitude toward our diplomatic service so far as the appropriations are concerned. I shall never be able to understand why President Roosevelt himself has not demanded a large increase in the sum allotted to the State Department, which is only \$16,000,000 a year. He has not hesitated to ask this Congress for authorizations and appropriations for the navy which come to approximately \$2,600,000,000. I understand that the State Department has not an adequate library, is even lacking in desirable periodicals—in other words, is deprived of the tools of its trade. If each Congressman could only be told what splendid work our permanent officials are doing in Europe today, to say nothing of in China and Japan, it seems to me that he would welcome the opportunity to recognize it by acceding to any appeal that the President might make.

BOOKS *and the* ARTS

ROOSEVELT AND HISTORY

BY MAX LERNER

THE American people, Mr. Dooley once reminded us, build their triumphal arches out of bricks, to have missiles handy when their heroes have fallen. So with Franklin D. Roosevelt, who has had his taste of Carlylean hero-worship and is now experiencing one of the fiercest lynching bees in our history. In this context the annotating and publishing of five volumes of the President's state papers*—one for the years of his governorship and one for each of the years of his first term, with volumes for the later years to follow—is an act of historical consciousness. Mr. Roosevelt is making his appeal from the distortions of the day to the perspective of the generations.

His volumes deserve that sort of perspective. They represent a significant event both in the art of history and the history of publishing. One could devote considerable comment to such things as the excellent format; the order and clarity of the editing by Judge Samuel Rosenman, who was the Governor's counsel and has been the President's literary aid and adviser; the dramatic story the speeches and messages tell of political conflict and national crisis and vast administrative effort in dealing with it; the light that the President's prefaces and notes and the excerpts from press conferences shed on the inside history of some of the major events and on future policy. But these are not volumes to be reviewed briefly either for text or gloss. It takes a week of reading merely to hit the high spots of the 3,500 pages, a million and a half words; one would need a small volume for adequate comment and criticism. I prefer to meet the President's courageous gesture toward history by a more foolhardy gesture, and risk setting down a few reflections that the volumes evoke on Mr. Roosevelt's place in what Justice Holmes has called "the campaign of history."

I use the Holmes phrase deliberately. For there can be no doubt that Mr. Roosevelt would be but small shakes if history had not conscripted him to its wars. The figure of him that emerges even from these relatively formal pages is a warm and human figure, with a lusty flair for both talk and action—but it is not that of a superman. Had he come to the Presidency at another time—say in 1924 instead of 1932, he might never have emerged as more than a skilful politician, with a sharp mind, an expansive manner, a sense of command. The first volume of these papers, dealing with his years as governor, is entitled *The Genesis of the New Deal* only as a historical afterthought. It needed the years that his sickness gave him of enforced isolation and

brooding reflection to develop in the Roosevelt of the 1920's a sense of mastery over himself and others; but it needed the tensions of the Great Depression to evoke that mastery and give it a historical framework within which it had an impact on events. Roosevelt was an able officer whose generalship would never have emerged except in a war atmosphere. It is no accident that the metaphors throughout the volumes on the Presidency are war metaphors. An intense, embittered, truncated personality like that of Napoleon or Hitler carries war within him wherever he goes and imposes that war on the world. Such a man is a coil of wild serpents, and he uses history as the arena for their mortal embrace. But a man like Roosevelt, whose energies are closer to the surface, needs the outer compulsions of economic collapse and social crisis to mobilize those energies and evoke the martial in them.

But what has been the character of this war? It started as a war against the depression; it has been transformed, by the inescapable logic of events, into a war between an entrenched minority and an awakening majority. I doubt that this trend was either conscious or deliberate. One can read in the successive volumes the President's struggle against it, the conflict between his inherited traditions of thought and action and the coercion of events. There is agony to be read in these volumes. For Mr. Roosevelt was not born to lead the democratic phalanxes. History will see in him the paradox of a landed aristocrat and gentleman farmer, a *rentier* living on funded income, who had to place himself for a period at the head of the urban and agrarian masses. He has always conceived of himself as making the minimum necessary adjustments to the conditions of capitalist collapse; but even that minimum has been fought so bitterly by one of the blindest ruling classes in history that Roosevelt had to become the conscious leader of the majority forces in order to save capitalism despite the capitalists. In one important sense his class roots have enabled him to assume this role. Had he come from the lower middle class he might have turned out a Hitler; had he come from labor, a Ramsay MacDonald; had he come from the financial group, a Neville Chamberlain. But coming from the landed gentry, with a tradition that had always included a distaste for money-making and not much of a knack at it, he has had a detachment from the economic rulers of America that a man who was one of them or a man who envied them and panted for their position could not have had. Only a member of an old family, a little amused at the fierce pecuniary and speculative absorptions of the *novi homines*, could have had the

* "The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt." Random House. Five Volumes. \$15.

courage to break with them and take the punishment.

In considering a final estimate, one must remember that the war is still going on and history is written by the survivors. A historian in a fascist America will set Mr. Roosevelt down as weak, indecisive, degenerate, a prisoner among reckless socialist theorists, a dreamer bemused in a humanitarian dream. A historian in a socialist America will see in him a confused but well-intentioned forerunner, who saved America from the anarchy of laissez faire but brought it close to collapse by his failure to carry through the logic of his own premises. Mr. Roosevelt himself does not have, and these volumes do not reveal, a clearly articulated social philosophy. He learns rapidly but retains slowly; he is a brilliant improviser but not a cogent thinker; he is a tactician without being a theorist. Yet he has a constant sense of historical perspective. He knows that we are living on the thin edge of history; he has no illusions about an individual's capacity to rule the forces of the historical process; far more than Lincoln or Andrew Jackson he is aware of his relation to the upsurging movements of American democracy, and of the strength and purposes of the opposing forces.

There are certain things that history will concede his having accomplished toward survival—a framework of social-security legislation, a basic code for labor bargaining that has given organized labor a chance to double its numbers, a set of cushions against precipitous bank panic, a gentleman's code for the marauders of the securities markets, a start toward public control of the utilities and other big business, a liberalization of the Supreme Court and a process of popular education on the judicial process. Above all else his role has been that of the educator who has had an enormous influence in changing the premises of popular thinking and political discussion. But will that prove enough? Twice he had a chance to go beyond this framework of achievement—once in 1933 in the midst of the general panic, when he could have nationalized the banking and credit system; a second time after his reelection in 1936, when instead of deflecting his energy on a constitutional fight he could have spent it on driving through a decisive program of economic planning. He muffed both chances.

If, as I suspect, Roosevelt's failure turns out to be like that of other reformers who have willed the ends without daring to will the means, he will be better remembered for his inadequacies than for his achievements. Yet whatever the outcome, he will be remembered also as a man who, without being of the people, was able to come near them; who, without being a scholar or an artist or a great master of words, was able to grasp and to some degree communicate what the common man dimly felt. The needs and hungers and aspirations of the ordinary man and woman speak, in all their confusion, through these volumes as they have never spoken before in the state papers of an American President since Lincoln. If these voices eventually will have to find far different channels for expression, it will be because the human vision of the reformers is clearer and stronger than their economic grasp and their political tenacity.

BOOKS

Ship Ahoy and Let 'Er Buck!

BOWLEG BILL, THE SEA-GOING COWBOY. By Jeremiah Digges. The Viking Press. \$2.

MOVE over, you myth-makers, wonder-spielers, tale-stretchers, fancy yarn-spinners, and just plain bull-throwers! Make room there on the "Lyars' Bench" for one who comes, eyes glittering like the Ancient Mariner's, to log a tale of a cow-hand's strange adventures with the creatures of the Deep and the Not-Too-Deep, including sparm whale, swordfish, blue shark, sea sarpint, mermaid, and the skipper's wife, as well as many others. To which have been generously added "new and valuable hints to the Whaleman, Fisherman, and Young Student of Deep-Water Navigation." Not too young however, for Jeremiah Digges has as free and easy and outrageous a fancy, and as quick and slick and supple a tongue, as any you have ever gasped and marveled at.

What miracles have been performed on the "Lyars' Bench," one of the oldest and certainly the humanest of human institutions! With its invention the human spirit was born, for here was the birthplace of the gods, the demi-gods, the great folk heroes—from Jahveh with his pillar of fire, to Paul Bunyan and his Blue Ox. What tall tales have been told here of Odysseus, Moses, Jonah, Sinbad, Robin Hood, Mike Fink, and John Henry. And now comes Bowleg Bill—eight feet three inches of him, "without them long-heeled boots"—from the shoal flats of Wyoming, where he was "harbor-pilot to them big schools of Western cattle—them hermaphrodite-rig bulls that are growed for their meat."

Digges does not tell us, unfortunately, just what trail and bottle Bowleg Bill hit to get himself unhorsed at last in a pulpree down in old New Bedford. It may be that Bowleg Bill was never quite sure himself. Anyway, when he came to on the deck of the whaleship Sawdust Sal, a foul blubber-boiler, a bucko mate was giving him the once-over, marveling at the way he "paid off on opposite tacks from the waist down" and feeling of his angora chaps, being quite baffled as he muttered that he'd seen many a strange sight in his time but never "a man that chafes so severe he needs rope-yarns to his drawers." Bowleg Bill did not like the ship or his work there, having to "sashay around on all them poles and wires," so he ordered the skipper to wheel the damned thing around for home—pronto!—which was done after he'd neatly trimmed the skipper's mustache with his forty-four.

But Bowleg appears to have acquired a taste for salt water, and put to sea many times again. He showed the hands many tricks with ropes never before dreamed of in the horse latitudes. By general acknowledgment, whenever he seen his duty, he done it, in his own stylish and competent way. He broke Slickbritches, a two-ton hoss-mackerel, to the saddle. He joked and jousted with swordfish, sea sarpints, the devil himself, without being tossed. Tiring of its idle Oompadiddle-diddle, he found new and surprising use for the skipper's bull bassoon, and ever did right by all women—even Our Nell, who turned up rather unexpectedly as the sea witch of Gloucester and was properly branded where an honest man's brand should be.

Digges is at his witty and colorful best in such stories as Mutiny on the Leery Liz and Gawd-Damned Historic, in

which historical fact and playful fancy have been fused and welded together in the alembic of imagination to produce symbol. The mutiny story, for example, has no superior, and I can think of no peer, for its sensitive comment, humorous but devastating, on the senseless drudgery and brutality of what is euphemistically known as discipline at sea. Bowleg Bill, with the democratic freedom of the frontier bred in his bones, simply could not understand twenty-four-hour-a-day slavery, or why he had to start rescrubbing a deck that he'd just finished scrubbing.

"Out where I come from, once a man's circle is rode, it's rode," he protests. "Once a man cuts out his string, it's cut. Once a calf is branded, the boys don't pass the time burnin' in mottoes under his tail. This here polishin' over what's polished don't make hoss-sense to me." Bowleg announces that he's quitting, only to be told that is mutiny and against the Admiralty law. "I'm lame on the Admiral's law," Bowleg allows, but "there ain't a game runnin' where a man can't quit, win or lose! I'm a-goin' downstairs now and ask the boss fer my wages and tell him I'm leavin' this outfit at the next fork." Soon there is a lively hornpipe on the quarter-deck, to the tune of his six-shooters, but no wages. When Bowleg Bill demands them, all the officers drop dead of shock, and the sails, yards, and masts come tumbling down. Wages! and the ship itself founders. Wages! who ever heard of wages! It's the romance of life at sea that counts.

The illustrations by Gropper fit perfectly the high good humor of these spirited tales and, as illustrations should, add a comment of their own on the text.

"Bowleg Bill," it should be added, is not only a personal triumph but one of many thousand evidences of the cultural contributions, direct and indirect, of the Federal Writers' Project, to which Digges makes grateful acknowledgment for the employment it offered him at his craft, enabling him to complete this "off-time" work. GEORGE F. WILLISON

Monolithic Landscapes

THE REST OF THE WORLD. By Ernest O. Hauser. Stackpole Sons. \$2.

THE rest of the world is the world outside the United States. The author knows how much bigger this rest is. It is quite obvious from his survey of the world political situation that he thinks seriously in international terms. He has conquered an immense amount of material and does not lose control in presenting it. As a writer for the Foreign Policy Association and for the Institute of Pacific Relations, and as author of the 1937 Foreign Policy Report on Anglo-Japanese rivalry, he is an almost official expert. It is all the more laudable, then, that he is able to take the reader on such a brisk excursion. He passes by all side roads, though he occasionally takes a convenient short cut. But one feels he knows the country behind the hills and mountains which he does not approach. More thoroughly explored is the "monolithic" landscape, and the democratic. (Monolithic is another term for totalitarian, first used by a neo-bolshevik, who said: "The executions were just, because we are a monolithic state.")

This book contains a profound analysis of the "totalitarian madness." The start is made with a diagnosis of the world situation, and when we are home again after the journey around the globe—not tired, not exhausted, but inspired by the swift trip and eager to do something—the author gives his conclusions. Of course they do not solve the paramount

problem, but they are of help, as the whole work is, in the clarifying process that is so necessary.

We travel from sphere to sphere of monolithic disturbance, crossing the life-line of the British Empire constantly, in the Mediterranean, in the Indian Ocean, in the Far East, in the Pacific. The aspirations of Germany, Japan, and Italy—their material and psychological content, with the accent on psychological—are analyzed. The Soviet Union is pictured as a disunion between Soviet state and Third International, somehow paralyzed. Another power in the making comes into prominence: the nationalism of the suppressed peoples in the colonies of the—at home—democratic and freedom-loving nations, above all, the Indians, who have changed from Gandhi's non-resistance to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's "We must fight, not spin." The author sees a twofold attack on Western liberal civilization. The British Empire carries the "tremendous burden of worldwide defense and worldwide responsibility" against forces of incalculable strength. War seems inevitable. Have we to take sides?

Ernest O. Hauser thinks that it not only takes two for war but also for isolation, that all the "liberal" nations are confronted with the necessity of action. He proposes first to beat off the monolithic onslaught and not to yield a square mile to the liberation movement of the colonial nations, whose resources we need in the fight for our own liberty. He clearly sees the contradictions involved, he recognizes that all foreign-ruled peoples have a right to independence, but he gives us no choice. After the dictators are done for, we may "gradually adapt their colonial regimes to our high standards." For the time being the hope that we will proceed in this direction after our victory, the author sadly feels, is all that is left for the "liberal."

I find myself unable to follow this argument, and I do not believe that history can or will move on this line. It also does not seem to me "that the time has gone when it was feasible to judge political phenomena according to one's conscience." I think that with every fresh bit of news from the burdened London statesmen the opposite becomes more and more clear: if we do not develop our conscience and fight for it we shall be beaten. In the concluding chapter, *Planning the Next Peace*, the author makes a profound observation: we have to fight the dictators with ideas; armaments will not be enough. Therefore he asks for a "new positive liberalism" which shall be "as strong, as positive, and as youthful a force as it was when it first broke through medieval darkness." He calls the great fight which is now going on "the war between the religion of force and the religion of freedom." Under freedom he seems to summarize the whole content of positive liberalism. The only trouble is that while we know exactly what force is, about freedom we have different opinions. Hauser includes, *nolens volens*, all the horrible facts behind present-day imperialism in his positive liberalism. And he thinks that we should learn from Herr Goebbels and use our radio stations for the propaganda of democracy. I doubt that contemporary liberalism can be rejuvenated by efficiency and technique. Not more words are needed, not even better words; it is facts and deeds that are necessary. Only the full realization of the idea of freedom, its expansion from a half-hearted political democracy to a general social democracy, will give culture a chance against barbarism.

Mr. Hauser writes with vigor, conviction, and an ability to excite. The critical reader of whatever political allegiance will read his work with great profit. It will force him to think twice.

FRANZ HOELLERING

"A Surrealist at a Distance"

ANABASIS. By St.-J. Perse. With a Translation into English by T. S. Eliot. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$1.25.

IN HIS "Manifesto on Surrealism," issued years ago when poets and painters were first exploring the madness that followed the Great War, André Breton drew up a list of men who exemplified, in their art or in certain aspects of their lives, the surrealist attitude. Toward the end of the list came St.-J. Perse, whom he declared to be "the surrealist at a distance." Indeed, Perse is at a distance both from his more experimental confrères and from their politically minded successors. Without indulging in the slapstick thaumaturgy of a Breton or a Cocteau, he has produced a poem as remote in its imagery as its title, however misleading, suggests, and as exotic as the author's pseudonym.

The poem has nothing to do with Xenophon. It is an account, dreamlike both in its vagueness and its vividness, of a march into unexplored country, the founding of a city, a resumed journey, the will to further adventures and conquests. Perse, whose real name is Alexis Léger, is a native of an island in the French West Indies, and has for years held an important post in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, specializing in Asiatic affairs. "Anabase" reads like a series of dreams such as might come to a man who handles daily things that reflect the guilt of empire, and whose leisure is spent in travel to far dominions.

The poem is not easy. One could wish that Mr. Eliot, who enjoyed the benefit of the author's collaboration in rendering the work into English, had provided his translation with notes that would elucidate some of the many obscurities. He confesses in his too meager introduction that he had to read the poem five or six times before he was "convinced of Mr. Perse's imaginative order." For the logic of the work, as he is careful to point out, is imaginative rather than conceptual. The reader is offered a sequence of pictures, of metaphors, of symbols, rather than a structure of ideas. The images, always strange ("this pale meaningless river, color of grasshoppers crushed in their sap"), often startling ("and the linen exposed to dry scattered! like a priest torn in pieces"), sometimes incomprehensible ("the cancers of camphor and horn revolve"), are juxtaposed in a fashion that renders them yet more wonderful. For Mr. Eliot they combine to produce "one intense impression of barbaric civilization." Others may receive a somewhat different impression. The two beautiful Songs in which the legend is framed, the indefiniteness of the image of the Conqueror, and the superb opening of the seventh section, "The Summer vaster than the Empire hangs over the tables of space several terraces of climate," suggest that the poem may be dealing with a more general theme—a summer in the Great Year of the ancients, the season when a given civilization is in full flower. But an exact interpretation, though desirable, is not essential to an enjoyment of the work.

In spite of its difficulties, "Anabase" has been translated into Russian and German, into the latter by the late Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Mr. Eliot's rendering, made some eight years ago, has been revised for the present edition. It could bear further revision. In several particulars he handles the original in an arbitrary fashion. It is excusable that he should substitute, presumably for the sake of the music, a singular for a plural, and vice versa, but it is not clear why he should introduce italics where the author has not thought they were required, or why he should elaborate a word unnecessarily in translating it, as "rapt god-drunken" for what, in the

original, is simply "ivre." In one instance he changes the sense astonishingly: "*Levez un peuple de miroirs*" becoming "Levy a wilderness of mirrors." His chief error is that he will render an identical word or phrase differently when it is repeated in the same passage, thus destroying the parallelisms which help to give so strikingly Oriental a character to the original. Thus "*cavalleries du songe*" is presented as "horsetramplings of dream," while nine lines further on, "*cavalleries de bronze vert*" is translated "cavalcades of green bronze." One is impatient with such flaws in work done by a poet with so discriminating a sense of language and so fine an ear.

The poem lacks the extreme originality that Mr. Eliot claims for it in comparing it with "Anna Livia Plurabelle," but just because it does not break so violently with tradition, its imaginative vitality has affected poetry more readily than has Joyce's unique work. For that reason, and for the sake of its intrinsic beauty and power, it deserves the wider audience that this new edition should gain for it.

BABETTE DEUTSCH

The Evolution of Physics

THE EVOLUTION OF PHYSICS. By Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld. Simon and Schuster. \$2.50.

IN RECENT years a remarkable number of our foremost physicists, such as Planck, Eddington, Jeans, Bragg, and Schroedinger, have published popular expositions of their science. None of these valuable books, however, with the exception of Bragg's "Universe of Light," affords so clear an insight into physical theory as the lay reader can obtain from the present volume. Its superior merit derives from two restrictions which Einstein and Infeld have imposed on their book: it deals almost exclusively with the few fundamental concepts of physics, and it considers these concepts only as *leading ideas* serving to coordinate experience. The first of these restrictions exhibits differences in the theoretical systems of physics in their most vivid and comprehensive aspect. And incidentally it also relieves the book of the need of any mathematics other than some simple intuitional geometry. The second restriction centers the reader's attention on the operational role of theoretical concepts in explaining and guiding experimental inquiry. It reflects the empirical criterion for scientific concepts which Einstein expressed in his "Meaning of Relativity": "The only justification for our concepts and systems of concepts is that they serve to represent the complex of our experiences; beyond this they have no legitimacy."

Within these restrictions, and because of them, the present volume attains an intellectual scope far greater than might be expected from the small number of its pages. It presents a lucid exposition of the basic features of Newtonian mechanics, Maxwell's field theory, relativity, and quantum physics. It explains the theoretical and experimental "crises" which have led to fundamental reconstructions in physical theory. Finally it offers some methodological comments on verification, conventions, hypotheses, and related topics.

Discussions of the nature of modern physics have often centered around the reality of the world as revealed in experience in contrast to the world as described in physical theory. The reconciliation of these two views seems, for example, to be the chief problem of Eddington's philosophy of science. The present volume is not entirely free of metaphysical notions, but it will nevertheless contribute largely toward laying the ghost of such pseudo-problems. For in

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From BURNING QUESTION: Making Your Living in a Monopolized World, pp. 68-69.

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sketching the evolution of physics Einstein and Infeld have exhibited the inventive character of science. Theories of physics are seen to be neither representations nor revelations of any "ultimate nature" of reality. They are ways of thinking about reality. That is to say, physical theories are methods of analysis and control of experienced objects, while the concepts of physics are intellectual devices invented to perform these functions. "Physical concepts are free creations of the human mind, and are not, however it may seem, uniquely determined by the external world."

Preoccupation with theoretical constructions has led the authors of this book to restrict their discussion to what might be called conceptual inventions, such as mass, force, ether, field, etc. And yet no account of the evolution of physics can be adequate without some mention of the role of technology in physical science. The invention of experimental instruments and of the machines necessary for their construction has led not merely to refinements of detail in observation but also, and not infrequently, to the discovery of new phenomena. Perhaps Einstein's relativity theory could have been developed without reliance on experimental techniques other than those known to Maxwell. But certainly modern quantum physics would be impossible without the resources of present-day technology.

But even without explicit mention of advances in experimental technique, the close connection between theory and technique is evident in the account that Einstein and Infeld have given of the evolution of physics. For throughout the book they emphasize two major tendencies in physical theory: on the one hand, the increase in systematic coherence illustrated, for example, by Einstein's theoretical deduction of the identity of gravitational and inertial masses; on the other hand, the elimination from physical theory of concepts having no operational significance, such as the concepts of substance, ether, and absolute space. It is in this latter tendency that modern physics, despite its variance from common sense, demonstrates its fundamental empiricism.

On certain points, however, it is not clear how far the authors have carried this empirical criterion in their methodology. For example, in discussing Newton's law of inertia they observe that this law "cannot be derived directly from experiment, but only by speculative thinking consistent with observation." Do the authors regard such "speculative thinking" as a mode of verification? If not, do they consider the "law of inertia" and similar "laws" as conventions or assumptions rather than as laws or hypotheses? Perhaps a revised edition of this book will answer such important methodological questions. Meanwhile we can rejoice in the present edition, which has much to offer not merely to the lay reader but to scientists and philosophers as well.

WILLIAM GRUEN

Hitler's Economics

GERMANY, THE LAST FOUR YEARS. By "Germanicus."

With an Introduction by Sir Walter Layton. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$1.75.

BRITAIN FACES GERMANY. By A. L. Kennedy. Oxford Publishers. \$1.50.

"GERMANICUS" is the pen name of a group of German economists now living in London who collaborated in an intensive investigation of the statistical material published by and in the Third Reich in the four years 1933 to 1937.

The authors set for themselves a task by no means simple. Government reports in Germany today are few and far between and conceal at least as much as they reveal. The Reich has not published an official budget since 1934. There have been no statistics on military and government expenditures and only haphazard figures on industrial and agricultural production. The authors were forced to supplement the scanty official material with reports from Germany's banks and corporations, but in his introduction Sir Walter Layton, England's recognized authority on the subject of national economy, vouches for their care and impartiality.

The first chapter, German Finances, 1933-1937, is unquestionably the most valuable. From it we learn that Germany's budget rose from 6,700,000,000 marks in the last year before Hitler's coming to power to an estimated 9,700,000,000 marks in his first year and to 18,800,000,000 marks in 1936-37. The Schleicher government spent 3,000,000,000 marks for armaments in the fiscal year 1933-34. This figure was doubled in the first year of Hitler's rule. In 1936-37 it was quadrupled and now amounts to 12,600,000,000 marks. These facts and many others are presented with a gratifying objectivity. The authors show that Germany's fiscal condition is unsound, but they deny emphatically that the Reich stands on the brink of economic collapse.

In the chapter on War Preparations the authors come to the startling conclusion that the regime since 1935 has tended more and more in a socialist direction.

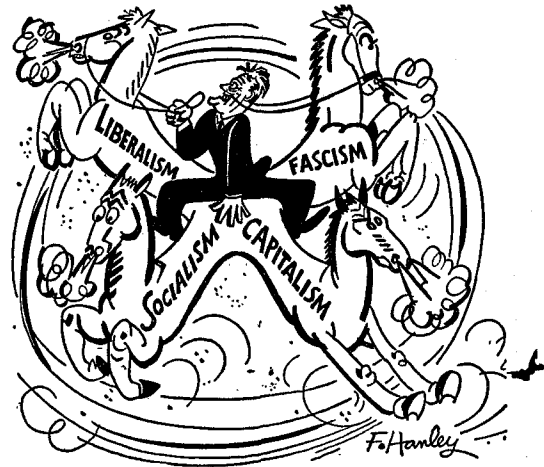
The Nazi leaders have been convinced by experience of the necessity of transforming to an economy on socialist lines, whereas in fact they assert their adherence to an economy based on the rights of private property and the individual initiative of the entrepreneur. They denounce the theory and practice of Marxist-Bolshevism . . . while their actions bear a greater resemblance every day to those carried out in Russia four to eight years ago.

This is not deliberate dishonesty. It is simply, say the authors, that the cost of rearming Germany has added so tremendously to the financial and economic difficulties of the Reich that leaving them to individual initiative and control would have resulted in chaos. Consequently "the present socialist tendencies in Germany are not the result of some theory, as they are in Russia, but part of a vicious circle started by the largest armament program the world has yet seen."

Their investigations have convinced the authors that the calamitous condition in which Germany finds itself is due largely, but not altogether, to rearmament expenditures. "These ills," they explain, "have been accentuated by an extravagance in public expenditures unequaled almost in any other country." The totalitarian state with its complicated apparatus and its enormous staff of public servants has almost doubled the cost of government.

"Britain Faces Germany" deals with a different phase of the National Socialist problem. Its author, A. L. Kennedy, was for many years assistant foreign editor of the London *Times*. Unlike Germanicus, Mr. Kennedy thinks he has a recipe for what ails the German people. German history shows, he points out, that the German character through the centuries has exhibited two distinct "strains." One is the strain of ruthlessness, duplicity, and arrogance, exemplified by the Prussianism of pre-World War days; the other is the disposition to reasonableness and good humor which he finds expressed in the democracy of the post-World War era. In the opinion of this reviewer, incidentally, he could hardly have found a worse illustration. In order to solve the problems present-day Germany has raised in the concert of na-

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by Helen Woodward

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tions, Mr. Kennedy believes that the powers must adjust conditions so as to permit the "good" strain to gain ascendancy over the other. This can be done, he believes, by making concessions to the Third Reich. The world, in helping the Germans, would help itself by turning Hitlerism, the "manifestation of the Hun spirit" in the German people, into humanitarian pacifism.

"Germanicus" has a much more realistic outlook. He writes:

What should England do when confronted by German blackmail? The answer is crystal clear. Any financial or territorial concession made to the present German regime would serve to perpetuate the tyranny which has forced Europe to become an armed or rapidly arming camp. . . . Herr Hitler must reap what he has sown, and his "nuisance value" must be discounted in his own disillusioned country and not in the City of London.

Hitler is stronger today than he was four years ago because concessions made to the Reich by the powers were put down to the credit of the Führer, in Germany and without. "The bad dog gets the extra piece of bread," says an old German proverb, but he is not less the bad dog after he gets it. What Mr. Kennedy—and the British government—still fails to understand is that the "Hunnish spirit," as represented by Germany's present-day rulers, must be overcome by the German people themselves. No gift from an outside power can do it for them.

LUDWIG LORE

FILMS

Sky Madness

THE hero of "Test Pilot" (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) is a loon (Clark Gable) who loves to risk his life by driving a pursuit plane or a bomber ballasted with sand bags to a height of six miles and then letting her drop. We see him pull on his padded suit and his oxygen tank; we follow him into the cockpit as another loon (Spencer Tracy) takes his gum out of his mouth and sticks it somewhere on the tail for good luck; we watch the plane lift itself with difficulty over trees and high-tension wires; we wallow upward with it to the dizzy place where instruments say it must begin to fall; and then we watch its long dive to earth—empty at the end perhaps because a wing has ripped off and Mr. Gable has had to descend separately under a parachute. Or there is the \$10,000 race around pylons when our hero observes that his engine has caught fire and resolves nevertheless to finish the last sixteen miles; which he does, winning the ten grand and drinking half of it up that night—for this is a mad life, my masters, and one who leads it must either get drunk on such an occasion or say goodbye to his nerves.

Then there is the time when the sandbags get loose and kill Spencer Tracy at Mr. Gable's side. Not to speak of the transcontinental speed trial which is interrupted over Kansas when an oil pump breaks down and Mr. Gable must descend to a grassy field over which comes running no less a farmer's daughter than Myrna Loy, who is engaged to a pleasant swain of the locality but decides within twenty-four hours to elope with Jim Lane and be married at Indianapolis. That, of course, is *her* initiation into loon life. She does not know yet, though she knows soon enough, what hell it is to be the wife of a man who is trying daily to kill himself. As she

learns the lesson her nerves start to go, one by one, like the overstrained wires of a cable, snap, snap; and along with them go the nerves of Spencer Tracy, who shows it however only by knocking an occasional mechanic down or by folding himself into sudden silence while Clark and Myrna make eyes at each other or bandy bright words over champagne and highballs. Only in the last five minutes of a two-hour film, after Mr. Tracy is dead and Myrna has been reduced to maniacal fear, does Providence in the shape of Mr. Gable's employer (Lionel Barrymore) step in and declare that henceforward he shall stay on the ground with a happy wife and a two-year-old son to help him take the final curtain.

If the tone of the above synopsis has seemed disrespectful, the reason is that something of the sort was necessary as a cover for the state of mind and body in which one spectator staggered forth from "Test Pilot." Two hours of being on the stretch is a long time, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer have made few minutes of it merciful. It does no good to remember that many of the scenes in the sky were managed in miniature, with little tin planes turning through cotton clouds; or that the persons in whose lives we become interested are of course never off the ground; or that in the filming of the tale nobody actually died. "Test Pilot" as it stands—there is no use denying it—is a terrifying affair; and, since that is what it tried to be, it must be acknowledged a success. That there are other ends at which to aim, that pity and terror can be perhaps more profitably felt when the heart is permitted to remain in its right place, that drama at its best is deeper than gooseflesh at its worst—these truths do not affect the fact that "Test Pilot" is on its peculiar level as incontrovertible as the explosion of ten planets. Personally I don't believe I can stand another sky thriller.

MARK VAN DOREN

ART

Art of the People

THE new show at the Museum of Modern Art (Masters of Popular Painting, current until June 27) demonstrates that there is an art of the people and that it is one of the most fruitful forces of our time. This is chiefly due to Henri Rousseau, whose nineteen canvases have unfortunately been placed at the far end of the largest gallery. Once a soldier in Maximilian's army in Mexico, later a toll-house collector, and now famous as the so-called "Sunday Painter," he was compelled to forgo his art until he was over forty. Then he quickly blossomed. He seems to have been sophisticated by love. His brush followed some inner pattern, perfectly true and known and sure, as he dreamed of the days he had known in Mexico or depicted the Paris which never ceased to enchant him. He is always appealing and sometimes he is astonishing. Consider The Umbrella, for example. The gray sky here says that rain is already coming, and the curious pedestrian stands beneath his petal-like umbrella as if waiting for it. This painting conveys a dampness to the very pores. How, one asks, did he do it? How did he get those grays within grays, for which painters have so often praised him? One can only say, with Philippe Soupault, his biographer, that he dipped into his heart and painted.

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It should also be noted that this same scene, with its low tenements and factory chimneys, is an industrial landscape, and that the lone person in it seems a spectator. From time to time this combination recurs, if not directly, then by implication. In the tiny Ile de la Cité a spectator has paused to watch workmen moving against the background of old Paris walls, while the tower of the Sainte Chapelle staggers up in the distance. High up a road in House near Paris a solitary figure contemplates an approaching cyclist. In the immaculate still life of cherries and kitchen utensils the simple artisan is giving thanks for the gifts that are his. So much for this side of him. The other important vein is particularly suggested by the jungle scenes (not shown) which contain a reclining nude. Her rhythms always invade the entire picture, or, where missing, still seem present. A similar tenderness runs through the flower pictures (two excellent examples in the present show) and the studies of children. These forms of life spoke to Rousseau in terms of beatitudes, and so he painted them. What more can one say?

Louis Vivin, recently dead, is less well-known in America. He was meticulous, pious, and imbued with a typically French élan. His Church Interior recalls old vaults, Romanesque wideness, Byzantine tiles. He has a blue-gray, almost frosty quality, the result of his own individualized pigment and an unpretentious, yet subtle, touch. His filing figures are inimitable. Camille Bombois, represented by twenty examples, is less attractive because more insistent. His colored buttocks, mirrored waters, and pasteboard buildings show too much the intention to be charming. His best work—as in Washer-woman and Card Players—is comparable to good genre. But twenty canvases are too many. Bauchant is the most engaging of the other Frenchmen, particularly in his flower pieces. Peyronnet might be tolerable in one canvas, say the forest scene, but with an entire wall he is a bore. Seraphine, the woman, has no taste. Rimbert has piety without lift.

Among the Americans the chief men are Joseph Pickett (1848-1918), whose large Manchester Valley faces the visitor as he enters the exhibition rooms. And rightly so, as it is spacious, racy, alive, yet curiously dignified. His Under the Council Tree is also cherishable. Adjoining the Picketts are nine canvases by Edward Hicks, a Quaker preacher of one hundred years ago. He combined a good space feeling with a just grouping, and a heartfelt zeal which is precisely like a good sermon. His Grave of William Penn is one of the best of all American primitives. John Kane, the Pittsburgh house painter, as usual celebrates the chocolate and grays of the industrial city and occasionally provides gay outings, as in the Scottish Dance or the summer afternoon by the Susquehanna. But he is uneven, and would profit if some of his twenty oils had been eliminated. "Pa" Hunt is an intimate old fellow, and two canvases are exactly right in number. Not so Hoyer, who is endless and unrewarding. The dour self-portraits of Canadé are adequate, and perhaps one or two Blanchard landscapes. Lebduska's color is not ingratiating. Cervantez, from the Southwest, is only twenty-three; perhaps he will "arrive" later. Dalson is untalented, while Gauchon, another Canadian, suggests to one observer at least that he has looked on Currier and Ives. Sullivan is a psychopathic and Pippin a pathetic shell-shocked veteran.

In general, among the Americans the quality—in Kane and Pickett especially—seems to be that of plain men speaking. The French are more poetical. In their incomparable Rousseau, that love-intoxicated inhabitant of the *faubourgs*, they produce one of those renewers who appear too seldom, and who, like a beloved folk-song or a legend about Lincoln, live forever.

JEROME MELLQUIST

Letters to the Editors

Oil, Silver, and the Peso

Dear Sirs: May I point out one rather important error in Mr. Herring's workmanlike reconstruction of the Mexican oil situation, printed in *The Nation* of April 16? The peso did not drop on March 27 when Washington announced that purchases of Mexican silver would be stopped, but immediately upon Cárdenas's announcement of expropriation, and before there were any hints of retaliatory steps on the part of our government. The break in the exchange was due to a sudden loss of confidence and wave of speculation induced directly by repercussions to the Cárdenas policies and not to Mr. Hull's ill-timed action.

The exchange was slipping even before expropriation took place. Having lived through the week-end of utter panic in Mexico that followed expropriation—when Mexicans were hawking pesos on the street corners at seven and eight to the dollar—I can attest that the silver-purchase announcement was a distinct anti-climax. The blow had already fallen. S. L. A. MARSHALL

Detroit, Mich., April 25

A Dakotan on Senator Nye

Dear Sirs: In the February 26 issue of *The Nation* O. G. Villard presented reasons for reelecting Nye of North Dakota to the Senate. A very large section of North Dakota voters wish to defeat Senator Nye in the coming election, for the following reasons:

1. Nye gained his Senatorial seat through the Nonpartisan League. Candidates receiving the indorsement of the league obtain the united support of all members. In return, all candidates indorsed are expected to work for the Nonpartisan program. Unfortunately the league has at times indorsed men who, upon gaining office, have proceeded to act on their own ideas regardless of the program outlined by league conventions. Nye happens to be one of those who have taken this independent attitude. This, we believe, is one very good reason for keeping Nye at home.

2. Villard states that no one has ever questioned Nye's sincerity and honesty in his presence. Be that at it may, many of us out here in the sticks have reached the conclusion that Nye is for Nye first, last, and always. He is a

fluent talker, but it has been said that men of few words usually do the straightest thinking, and we believe this holds true in Nye's case. His thinking has become erratic and far out of line with the thoughts of the common people of North Dakota.

3. The forward-looking people of North Dakota know Nye for what he is, a superficial liberal who has always flirted with the reactionaries and whose chief backers in the coming election are the reactionary forces of the state.

I do not wish to discount Nye's work in the munitions inquiry. Yet what did the inquiry accomplish in the way of preventing war? The Neutrality Act, which was an outgrowth of that inquiry, has proved more of an aid to aggressor nations than a deterrent. So even that one thing which might be chalked up to his credit has proved to be of little value.

I. C. FRENDBERG

Bismarck, N. D., April 25

General Motors' Profits

Dear Sirs: Without denying that ways and means of concealing profits do exist, may I point out that Eliot Janeway in your April 16 issue erred seriously in his discussion of General Motors? His assertion that the increase in inventory during the first half of 1937 over 1936 in itself caused a like decrease in profits indicates an appalling lack of understanding of elementary accounting principles. Since General Motors has indicated the correct amounts of inventory on its balance sheets on the dates mentioned in the article, any variations in inventory quantities (disregarding fluctuations in unit values) would have no effect on the company's profits. Therefore, General Motors' "real" profit for the 1937 period was \$30,000,000 less than in 1936 and not \$19,000,000 more as Mr. Janeway puts it.

While Mr. Janeway's final recommendation of federal inquiries into profits is sound, his article would have been far more convincing had it shown a better understanding of simple accounting principles.

ALFRED M. LEVIN, C. P. A.

Chicago, April 19

Dear Sirs: "Inventories" are materials on hand after production and should not be included in the "cost of production."

Mr. Levin's objection to my article is therefore well taken in all matters concerning "elementary accounting principles." But the General Motors exhibit is a prime example of advanced accounting. The key to the question is whether General Motors has charged at least part of its inventories off to cost of production and at the same time kept them as assets in inventories account.

Consider the problem concretely. General Motors buys steel to be used in body fenders in April, 1937, when production is booming. It puts this carload of steel into the works. Labor is spent in stamping out thousands upon thousands of fenders. All this time General Motors is legitimately accumulating production costs. In a word, thousands of tons of materials worth millions of dollars are passing along the assembly line from "inventories" in the balance sheet of General Motors to "costs" in the profit-and-loss account. And then the fiscal period comes to an end. What is to remain as "inventories" in the balance sheet, and what is to appear as "costs" in the profit account?

Mr. Levin gives us the textbook answer. But can he say that General Motors in actual practice separated each dollar of inventory from each dollar of inventory upon which production costs had been accumulated? And if he said it, how could it be proved? A twenty- or thirty-million-dollar item which has been simultaneously kept as inventory and written off as cost can be lost in the hundreds of millions of dollars in the General Motors balance sheet without causing a ripple. But what a difference such an item can make to the company's profit statement! The process of playing shuttle between inventory and costs can go on indefinitely, and does. No one can point to any other source of funds—new financing, bank loans, depleted surpluses—for this terrific over-accumulation of inventory.

ELIOT JANEWAY

New York, April 28

Revolt on the Campus

Dear Sirs: The University of Washington at Seattle was the scene of a militant student strike on April 21, when several hundred student pickets closed down the university's two swank theaters. This action was the culmination of two weeks of protest by drama students

over the loss of their three favorite instructors, one having been dismissed and the others having resigned as a protest against the policies of the administration. The students had carried their demands for the retention of these instructors all the way to President Lee Paul Sieg without avail. Then they staged a mass-meeting on the campus and followed it with the strike action.

President Sieg, it should be noted, was a dean at Pittsburgh University under Chancellor Bowman when Ralph Turner and other professors were dismissed some years ago. Last year he reorganized the lower ranks of the teaching staff, demoting three efficient and popular members of the English Department to the status of teaching fellows, preparatory to firing them this year. In January Mrs. Lea Puybroeck Miller was dismissed from the Art Department in spite of strong protests because she had committed the crime of marrying another faculty member. In March the administration closed down a student discussion club for inviting a progressive political candidate to speak on the campus.

Then on April 8 it was announced that Mrs. Florence James, for eight years a part-time assistant professor in the drama division, was being dismissed. The reason given was that the department had grown too large for part-time teachers; but Mrs. James retorted that she would be glad to teach full time and to direct student plays in addition. Mrs. James, an outspoken progressive, is such an able director that she was called upon to take a leave of absence last year to direct the plays of the Federal Theater and the Rockefeller-subsidized State Theater for children. On the next day the two able directors of the highly commercialized "little theaters" run by the drama division resigned. One of these was Sophie Rosenstein, who has sent many successful actors and actresses to New York and Hollywood, including Frances Farmer.

The Instructors' Association asked

President Sieg for a chance to review the James case, in accordance with an agreement signed with the administration three years ago, but they received a flat "no" for an answer. The teachers' union local then took up the case with the Seattle Central Labor Council, which has summoned President Sieg and Glenn Hughes, the head of the drama division, to appear and show cause for firing Mrs. James. Will the history of the damaging investigation at Pittsburgh several years ago be repeated in Mr. Sieg's new home?

COLE STEVENS

Seattle, Washington, April 22

Aid for Austrian Refugees

Dear Sirs: The Geneva headquarters of the International Committee to Aid Political Refugees are flooded with newcomers from Austria, while the stream of refugees from Germany has not yet subsided. The Austrian situation seems to be much worse than the German, and neighboring countries are much more crowded with refugees. Geneva, already jammed, is usually the first stopping place for people who are compelled to leave Germany or Austria in a hurry.

The American branch of the international committee, 136 West Fourth Street, New York, appeals to the American people for funds which it will forward to Geneva to be used to save some, at least, of these people from utter destruction. We urgently need the sum of \$50,000 to meet the first emergency.

THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE OF
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
TO AID POLITICAL REFUGEES

New York, April 28

Material on Gorki

Dear Sirs: The Gorki Institute of Literature, Moscow, which is gathering biographical data on the late Maxim Gorki, has requested me to appeal to American readers for documents, letters, or other material relating to Gorki's visit to the

United States in 1906. Any material sent to me at the Embassy of the U. S. S. R. will be forwarded to the institute.

C. OUMANSKY, Counselor

Washington, D. C., April 26

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